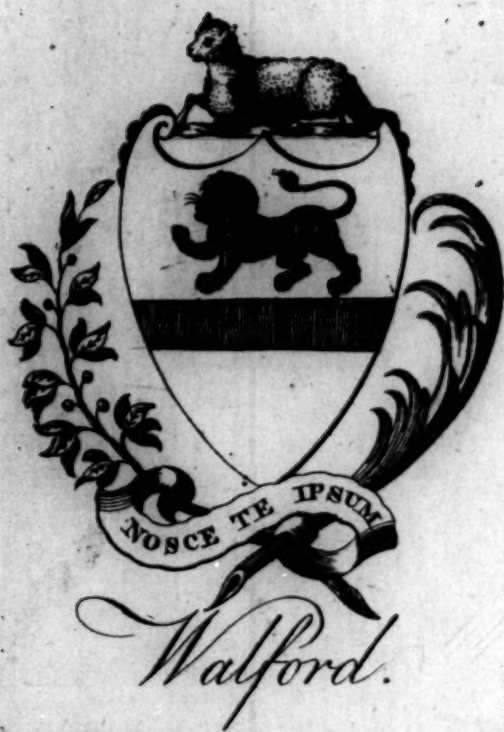
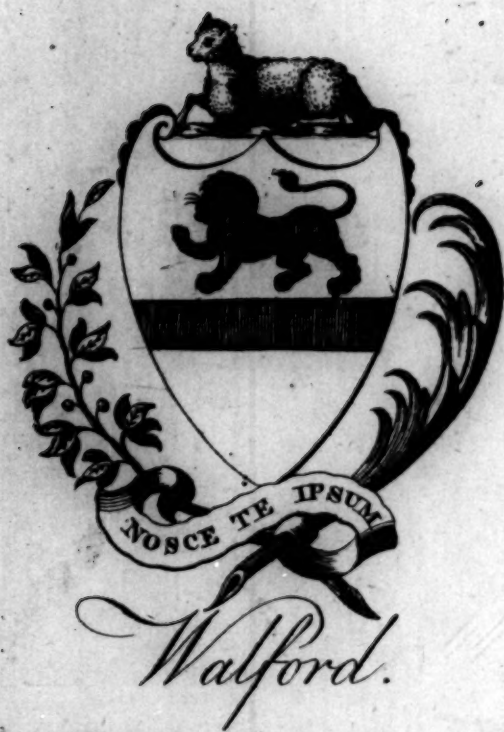








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SIBERIAN ANECDOTES,

A

N O V E L.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

CONTAINING

REAL HISTORIES

AND

LIVING CHARACTERS.

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.

*Example strikes, when precept fails,
And sermons are less read than tales.*

VOL. I.

S

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SIBERIAN ANECDOTES.

INTRODUCTION.

AT the unfortunate battle of Poltowa, it was the lot of Baron Rosen, a captain of dragoons in the army of Charles XII. to fall, with many other gallant officers, into the hands of the Great Czar Peter. He had that day dismounted with his troop to storm the Czar's intrenchments, and having carried two redoubts sword in hand, he fell nobly overborn with numbers, and covered with wounds on the third.

His wounds happily were not mortal. His recovery was speedy: and

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he was sent, with his brave companions, to be dispersed through the regions of Siberia, then little better than a savage wilderness.

As the very nature of the country prevented the possibility of escape, these noble exiles were, in every place of their captivity, indulged with perfect liberty; and not merely permitted to be at large in the cities and fortresses, where their residence was appointed, but to hunt and amuse themselves in the territories around them.

As many of them were men of genius, improved knowledge and genteel accomplishments, unknown almost to the Russians settled in that uncultivated wild, they endeavoured to soften the melancholy hours of their captivity, in employments suited to their various tastes; in the mechanics, music, painting, &c. and amused themselves

themselves in attempts to communicate to those around them, a relish for, and acquaintance with, the arts, to which they had before been entire strangers, securing thereby from the inhabitants an hospitable reception, and infusing into them a portion of their own attainments; the effects of which in the civilization of the country immediately appeared, and continue increasing to this day.

It was the destiny of Baron Rosen with his friend Crucius, the lieutenant of his troop, to be fixed at the fortress of Dolonska, where the river of that name joins the Irtysh.

The country around it was beautiful, and being the southern part of Siberia, though the rigours of the winter in that region are every where severe, they are not there of equal continuance.

Two or three villages contained all the Russians, within some hundred versts, exclusive of the garrison, the rest of the country being wandered over, rather than inhabited, by the Tartars, its ancient possessors, now subject to the dominion of Russia.

The Baron Rosen had enjoyed the happiness of a good education, was well acquainted with the languages, a proficient in music, and on his patrimonial estate, which he had considerably improved, he had, before the war, amused himself with agriculture.

The officers of the garrison treated their prisoners with all politeness. They were lodged in the town, and the Czar's allowance for their maintenance, though small, in that cheap country afforded them affluence.

They soon made themselves masters of the Russian language, and as it was probable their captivity might not soon

soon terminate, they endeavoured after the first months of melancholy were past, to find some employment for their time; and as they perceived the unpolished ignorance, which reigned around them, they amused themselves in giving lessons in the languages, sciences, and what they knew of mathematics and mechanics, to those who seemed desirous to profit by their superior intelligence.

As they were under no restraint, they often made excursions for pleasure or curiosity into the adjacent country. In one of these rambles, accident led them to a rising ground, on which stood a house, which commanded a noble view of the river beneath, and of a village that occupied part of the intermediate space.

They stood for a moment to admire the enchanting scene, where nature had furnished the principal

objects, though some appearances of cultivation served to heighten the scene.

An ancient Knez observing them gazing with delight on the prospect, very civilly accosted them, and invited them to partake of such refreshments as his house afforded. He had seen the Swedes at the fort with the Russian officers, and the respect paid to them, together with the fame of their singular knowledge and attainments, engaged his regard, and made him pleased with an opportunity of cultivating an acquaintance with them.

They politely thanked him for his civility; accepted the invitation, and followed him to the house. It was built of wood, as all the houses in that country usually are. The rooms sufficiently spacious, but unornamented; and the furniture, chosen for use, not elegance; was neat, though simple.

The

The Knez, with evident complacence, introduced the illustrious strangers to his family. It consisted of his lady, about his own age, and one daughter, advancing to seventeen. Her person was tall, and exceedingly well made; her complexion a brunette; her eyes singularly brilliant, and the contour of her face remarkably pleasing; her hair was chestnut, bright, and flowed in ringlets down her shoulders; her voice soft and musical; and an uncommon modesty, approaching to bashfulness, on the least occasion, brought a blush into her cheeks; owing to their retired situation, where little company was to be met, to give a polish to the manners, and familiarize an intercourse with the world.

After the usual compliments, refreshments were ordered. The Swedes were delighted with the cordiality of
B 4 their

their reception, and the manners of their hosts. They would have taken their leave ; but the Knez pressed them so warmly, to favour him with their company that day, they could not civilly decline it, nor indeed had they any reluctance, to cultivate an intimacy with a family, so singularly agreeable.

The ladies retiring whilst dinner was preparing ; the Swedes begged the favour of the Knez, to take a view of the environs of his castle ; as the spot appeared remarkably beautiful, and the country bore a face of uncommon fertility. The Knez attended them with pleasure, and after shewing them his gardens, his studd, his falcons, and his grey hounds, wished, whenever the chace was agreeable, that they would do him the favour of making use of them, as his territory afforded abundance of
game,

game, and himself, with his servants, would be happy to attend them. They thanked him for his obliging offer, and assured him, that they should esteem it a favour to be reckoned among his friends ; wishing where the inducements were so many to draw them, they might not be too often troublesome.

He replied, with a frankness better than ten thousand compliments, that he really meant himself to be the gainer by his invitations ; as the company of men so accomplished, was very rare in that country : that it had been the unhappy lot of his family to be cast there as exiles, so that the honour of their acquaintance would be to him a real acquisition.

They naturally asked, how long his family had been settled there. He sighed, and said many years ; but

that necessity, not choice, had been the occasion of it.

You awaken our curiosity, said the Baron Rosen, when you mention yourself as an exile.

I shall have no objection to satisfy it, said the Knez, and if you will spend the evening with us, and can be happy in the accommodations my house affords, I shall secure thereby the pleasure of your company, and it may amuse *you* to hear the history of our settlement in this distant corner of the world. You, gentlemen, are not alone unfortunate. If it be any solace in exile to hear of companions in suffering, we can afford it you. They bowed and professed themselves highly obliged by his engaging cordiality, assuring him, that they could pass the evening no where so agreeably, as under his roof.

They

They were continuing their walk around the domains of the Knez; where neatness and plenty seemed to reign; and had entered an avenue cut through a wood of beech and chesnut, which covered them from the sun, when turning to the right, a prospect suddenly broke upon them, heightened by the gloom from whence they had emerged.

A noble terrace, formed by the hand of nature, covered with the liveliest green, was before them. Above it, a hanging wood terminated at a distance with some dark rocks, added a majestic air to the scene. Beneath them, yet distinctly seen, appeared the village, at the extremity of which rose the church, on a little elevation; and its beautiful spire glittered in the sun. Around it, corn fields and pastures, with the herds and flocks, enlivened the prospect. A considerable

able stream, nearly full to the brim, appeared in all its windings through the valley, and after passing the village, poured its waters into the vast and rapid Irtysh; which, at some versts distance, spread like an arm of the sea; whilst its farther bank rose abrupt with noble woods, over which, at a vast distance, the blue mountains lifted their heads, and bounded the horizon.

On the side of this terrace, between the woods, stood the castle of the Knez, to which they gently ascended, turning often to admire the prospect, which, the more they examined it, discovered new beauties.

If I must be an exile, said the Baron, I know not where I could be sooner tempted to forget my native country, than in this delightful retreat. Indeed, said the Knez, if report is to be credited, the most admired

mired spots of Russia or Sweden, can scarce stand in competition with some in Siberia. We only want such men, Sir, as you, and the Baron Crucius, your friend, to civilize our manners, and introduce arts and manufactures, and then we should no longer regret our lot.

And, pray Sir, said Crucius, how far extends your territory? The bounds, said the noble Russian, Sir, are yet unfixed. We are here in a state of nature, where occupancy constitutes the property. The few Tartars, who once roamed on these plains, since the Russians have begun to settle the country, have removed to a distance; and the only inhabitants we have to dispossess, are the wild beasts and their feeblers prey, that traverse the woods or feed on the lawns, between them. Ten million of souls
might

might here find subsistence without difficulty.

They had just reached the gate ; it stood open ; they entered the hall, and found the dinner only waited their return. Plenty of game and fish, added to the produce of the domain, afforded, if not a splendid, a most hospitable repast. The good lady of the house pressed them to demonstrate the satisfaction they professed in their entertainment, by their hearty use of it : adding that their house was seldom honoured by such visitants.

Madam, said the Baron, it is well your situation secures you from intrusion ; for, were it known how desirable Siberia is become, and how much hospitality and politeness are to be found on the Irtysh, the emigrants from Russia would soon increase, and your visitants become inconveniently numerous.

numerous. I begin to fear my friend Crucius and I shall grow troublesome; for, after having spent one day so very agreeably, we shall be often tempted to wish a repetition of the pleasure.

Troublesome! said the Knez, try my noble friends. You are not now breathing the air of a court, where profession and compliment supply the place of sincerity and truth: the oftener this roof covers you, the more welcome you will be in it.

The dinner was removed. Mead, beer, and some of the liquors which the country afforded, were brought; and the Knez obligingly pressed his guests to help themselves. I live, said he, at so great a distance from the regions where the grape flourishes, that I can offer you merely the produce of the land where we dwell. You will, I hope, find it good of the kind; and, if a cordial welcome could
make

make it Tokay or Burgundy, it would experience that transmutation.

Sir, said Crucius, the welcome you bestow on us, gives it a relish Tokay or Burgundy never afforded. Indeed, the Baron and I drank so little wine, when it flowed around us, that it is no loss to us to be without it. In so agreeable company, bowing to the ladies, we need nothing more to exhilarate.

Eloisa blushed ; her mother smiled. We shall be happy, said she, to find it so, as nothing would give us greater pleasure, than to be able to soften the tedious hours of your captivity.

The ladies rose soon after and retired. The gentlemen stayed not long after them ; and, as the evening was fine, they took a turn on the terrace ; and, entering a summer-house, which overlooked the beautiful scene that presented itself before them,—
they

they had no sooner seated themselves, than the Baron, leading the conversation from the country and its culture, to an enquiry after its original state, the Knez obligingly entered on the account which he had promised to give them.

THE

HISTORY OF THE NARESKIN.

CHAPTER I.

TILL my grandfather came hither, said the Russian, these beauties, you are pleased to admire, were without a beholder ; except that now and then a herd of Tartars pitched their tents, careful only about the pasturage, and indifferent to the prospect.

The

The noble Nareskin, early in life, entered on the military line; and when, by his father's death the patrimonial estate came to him, he employed his accession of fortune in pushing himself in the army, and was a colonel about thirty. His person was agreeable, though rather of the inferior size; and no man was more adroit in all martial exercises. He was much carested by his friends; and being recommended to the Czar, he appointed him his equerry.

Being now very frequently at court, the Czarina took particular notice of him, and he was soon promoted to be her chamberlain. As this necessarily led him, in the discharge of his office, to be near her majesty's person, he could not but perceive the flattering distinction which she paid him; and that she appeared always
in

in good humour when he was in her party.

The vast distance of her rank, excluded the idea of any thing intended, but favour ; which, by his assiduity and fidelity in his office, he wished to deserve. But a circumstance, which very much startled him, began to awaken his suspicions.

There was at court a masked ball given ; and, under that disguise, it is but too well known, intrigue is easily managed.

One of the masks tapped him on the shoulder, Do you know me ?

Indeed, Madam, said he, I have not that pleasure ; but, if your face is as fair, as your figure is elegant, I certainly should be happy to know you.

You men, said she, have always your protestations ready ; and if ever we women are fools enough to trust them, you despise us for our credulity,

ty, and abuse the confidence we repose in you.

A man of honour, replied Nareskin, never abuses confidence reposed in him.

There is a person in the world too partial to you, said she, but you are dull at conjectures. If my figure pleases you, as much as you pretend, the next mask you will follow it. Then turning round, she mingled with the crowd, and Nareskin, though he attended her with diligence, soon lost the view of his inamorata.

When he returned from the ball, the language of this agreeable unknown dwelt on his mind. In all the circle of his connections, he could not fix upon a creature, whose manner and voice (though feigned under the mask) resembled the lady, but one ; and of her he hardly dared harbour the idea.

The

The Czarina asked him, when he was next day in waiting, how he was entertained at the mask. He was confounded with the question, and hesitating, replied, the entertainment was exceedingly pleasing.

Then you mean, said she, I suppose to be at the next.

If your majesty's service does not require my attendance, I should certainly be in the group.

Oh, says she, Nareskin, my service shall wait, when so agreeable a party is formed.

Her favours were now showered upon him; but in a way perfectly consistent with her dignity; though something peculiar in her manner of addressing him, confirmed him in his apprehensions. He waited therefore the return of the next masquerade, with a mixture of curiosity, suspense, and something rather painful, than

than pleasing in his mind, as he perceived a precipice before him, the attempt to avoid which, or to adventure to the brink of it, would be equally perilous.

The night came ; the masks assembled : and late in the evening he saw the elegant shepherdes, for that was the dress she had before assumed, mingling in the crowd.

He immediately accosted her.

You are right, said she, follow me. And passing into a bow window, which was at the end of the saloon, he seized her hand, and, with the usual effusions of gallantry, pressed to know, to whom he was indebted for this distinguishing favour.

Nareskin, said she, if you knew the favour designed you, it is distinguishing. We women are fated often to be sacrificed to those, to whom our hearts feel no attachment ; and where
we

we do, meet with infidelity and ingratitude. Perhaps I may add to the number. However, I am determined to make the trial. When, lifting her mask half aside, and instantly replacing it, he discovered the Czarina.

My grandfather was ready to drop on his knees before her. She perceived his confusion.

This, said she, is not the place for homage; nor is it exacted from you. I wish to hold you in my service by a more endearing tie. Her hand was still in his, and when he had recovered the agitation of this discovery, he pressed it to his lips, and vowed unchangable fidelity.

Prove it, said she, and it shall be my care to make your fortune equal to your felicity. She returned to the group, and Nareskin, forbidden to follow her, quickly retired to his
apartments

apartments in the palace, agitated with a tumult of ideas.

Nothing could tend more to flatter his pride, nothing so assuredly to make his fortune, as the Czarina's favour. Nor was her person among the least of her charms; retaining still, though in the wane, a very considerable share of beauty, and an elegance of form superior to every lady of her court. But my grandfather had high notions of honour; and, though gay, not destitute of sensibility of conscience. He felt withal the dangers attendant on the slippery path before him. The conflict of these contending passions disturbed his repose, and he arose hardly knowing how to act, or what to determine.

In this uncertainty, his office called his attendance, and his elegant mistress received him, with the most flattering attention. His appointments
were

were increased, and with the increase of favour and fortune, the respect of all around him, added to the charm, and seduced him either really to feel the attachment he professed, or to fancy that he did: so that the Czarina appeared satisfied in those short interviews, when under the cover of a mask, they could indulge a communication of their sentiments.

At the last ball, Nareskin, said she, softly, as they stood near each other, I am tired with the restraints we are necessarily under here; secure a little cabin in this neighbourhood, to which we may retire from hence, and return unnoticed during the carnival, when the masks every where in the streets will prevent suspicion or interruption. He promised immediately to look out. The carnival was only six weeks distant, and before

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that

that time he doubted not, he could procure it.

But when he was alone, and began to consider this proposal, his eyes opened and his heart staggered at the consequences. He felt in such a situation what must ensue. His conscience, his honour revolted. He condemned his ambition, his interest-
edness, and his passions that had seduced him to appear, what now he really felt he was not : and foresaw, that sometime or other, the eyes of suspicion would not fail to bring to light, a scene which must cover him with infamy, ruin, and perhaps the most ignominious death. Yet he feared the malignity of an enraged and disappointed woman ; and such a woman who had it in her power, by one means or another, to inflict her utmost vengeance.

He

He felt now, as he deserved, the misery into which he had insensibly glided, yielding to the seductions of pride and the delusions of appetite: and saw that the return from the labyrinth, was little less difficult, than to advance in the same bewildered path.

He was deep sunk one morning in these reflections, when the servant announced the Abbot of Branski: a particular friend of his, and a man of uncommon knowledge and exemplary piety. It struck him that he might gain the worthy Abbot's advice, without informing him of the circumstances, by stating a similar case, as the situation of a friend of his with a lady.

The Abbot heard with attention, and replied with earnestness. Your friend has acted wrong, very wrong. And can he be really a man of con-

C 2

science,

science, and hesitate a moment, whether he shall persist in it? As a minister of the sanctuary, I must say, his eternal prospects will make the loss even of a right eye, which he must pluck out, his gain: but were I, as a man of prudence and virtue, merely to regard his views in this life, if he would consult the peace of his mind, and the comfort of his future days, he must break without delay these sinful bands. There can be no compromise nor procrastination. The man that hesitates, where the path of duty is so plain, must be undone.

The Chamberlain concurred with him in sentiment, and professed himself happy to find the advice, which he had given his friend, concurred in general with the Abbot's opinion.

When the Abbot retired, Nareskin felt himself fixed in his resolution to break this connection, whatever might be

be the consequence : though how to begin it he hardly knew. He determined once, that he would take the first opportunity to acknowledge to the Czarina herself, the truth which honour and conscience dictated. But his heart failed him ; the part he had acted, confounded him ; shame stopped his mouth. He resolved at last to pretend sickness, though the agitation of his mind had so affected him, that it was not far from a reality. He confined himself to his chamber ; the Czarina sent the most obliging enquiries. He seemed to fear a decline ; submitted to the discipline of medicine, and, by his complaints, drew in his physician to advise change of air and the country, as necessary for his recovery. The leave of absence, which was pleaded as essential to his restoration, was readily granted, and a covered litter conveyed him,

him, as an invalid, to his own villa, not very distant from the capital.

He there instantly felt a part of the burden, under which he laboured, relieved by this distance from the court, and a thousand times wished he might never return to it again. The misery he had endured in the midst of greatness, made him loath that scene, and long for some more substantial enjoyment.

Not far distant from his villa, was the castle of the Knez Demidoff. He had an only daughter, who, though not a beauty, was possessed of a brilliancy of features, that could not fail to charm. Her mind highly cultivated, her manner soft and engaging, and endued with the most endearing sensibility.

They were no sooner informed of the Chamberlain's indisposition, than they sent to enquire after his health,
and

and if their company would not be troublesome, they would call upon him. He politely thanked them for their obliging offer, and expressed how much pleasure it would give him to receive them.

They failed not the next day to call upon him. They found him to appearance an invalid, though convalescent : and he received them with great cordiality. They had been acquainted formerly, but since Narefkin had taken up his residence at court, their intercourse with each other had been interrupted.

Demidoff had been ordered to retire to his own seat in the country, on account of his known attachment to the family of Demetrino, whom the present Czar had dethroned, such revolutions in Russia being frequent ; and though, for many years, his conduct had been unexceptionable and

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peaceable,

peaceable, he continued still in disgrace, an exile from court. Having lost his lady some years, his daughter had been his care and solace. He had endeavoured to improve her person and understanding by the best masters he could procure, and to impress her heart with the love of virtue, inculcated most powerfully by his own exemplary conduct.

Nareskin was happy in meeting so agreeable a neighbour, and charmed with the manners, person, and understanding of Camilla. Their visits were repeated, and Nareskin was soon able to return them. Every time they met, he parted with reluctance; and felt in converse with Camilla, a momentary respite from the misery which he yet carried about him. It was not long before he discovered the deep possession she had taken of his heart; and though he apprehended the storm which

which was gathering over him, he determined, at all events, to join his destiny to hers, if Camilla's heart was to be won, and Demidoff consenting.

She was a proficient in music; and he often took delight, when at her house, to stand over her, as she played. Her father had gone out on some business, and Nareskin requested her to sit down, and favour him with a song. She felt pleasure in obliging him; and, laying her book on the desk, he opened it on the following air:

Melted by the genial ray,
See the snow dissolves away,
Life returns, the valleys sing
Welcome the reviving spring.
Still beneath a frozen sky,
Must unhappy Corral lie.
Shine, fair Orra, on his heart,
Bid the chill of death depart.

Orra heard the lover's pray'r,
Smil'd, and bid him not despair.

She rose, when she had finished the
air, and laid by her lute. Nareskin
approached her with timidity; and
taking her hand—And were I Corral,
said he, and you fair Orra, might I
hope for a like gracious smile?

Eye, Nareskin, said Camilla, cover-
ed with blushes, you know a daugh-
ter's smiles should only follow her
parent's approbation. Then, gently
drawing away her hand, she retired
in evident confusion, not displea-
sure, as if to avoid a farther expla-
nation.

As Camilla's answer appeared not
unfavourable to his wishes, and he
could not but highly approve the pro-
priety of her observation and conduct,
he determined, without delay, to
break the matter to her father. He
enquired for him, and hearing he was
in

in his study, he tapped at the door, and entering with some embarrassment in his countenance, he drew his chair to the desk, where Demidoff was seated, and after a short silence, my friend, said he, I have an affair to communicate to you, that nearly interests my future life, and in which you too are much concerned. It is impossible not to feel the excellencies of Camilla, and to aspire after a heart, formed to confer happiness on the possessor of it. You know my situation in life, that in the goods of fortune I am affluent: and may I not hope to gain your credence, that it would be the study of my life to contribute to her felicity.

Nareskin, replied the Knez, you do me honour in the alliance you propose. For my own part, it is impossible I should object to it: but it has ever been my judgment, that though
a daughter

a daughter should not dispose of herself without her parents approbation, yet, in a matter on which all her future comfort must depend, she should be under no command in her choice, and be allowed to judge what will contribute to her real happiness. Camilla has ever been the most dutiful of children, and deserves every indulgence: my consent must therefore depend on her inclinations; which, if they are found as favourable to you as my wishes, your difficulties will not be great.

But, Nareskin, added he, I foresee others, to which, perhaps, your affection blinds you; and as your friend, I should be unfaithful not to remind you of. You know, how ever little cause there be for suspicion, that I am regarded with a jealous eye as inimical to the Czar, and attached to the dethroned family: such a connection,

tion, may perhaps do you much disservice at court, and greatly impede your advancement to those honours which your abilities and merit cannot fail to procure.

The highest honour I aspire after, said Nareskin, is to call Camilla mine. A court hath nothing to give me, that could stand one moment in competition with her love and your friendship. Besides, your unexceptionable conduct in your retirement, ought ere this to have disarmed resentment, and perhaps my interest may restore you to the Czar's favour; if not, I see no just cause why my choice should expose me to his displeasure, who have ever served him with unimpeached fidelity.

But, said Demidoff, you know, Baron, the malignant air of a court: how often the most innocent actions are misrepresented. However, if
your

your determination is fixed, you have my free consent to sound Camilla's inclinations, and try to secure a place in her affections.

He had scarce finished, when Camilla tapped at the door, and entering, would have retired instantly, blushing on seeing Nareskin with her father: but he called her back. Pray, Camilla, said he, what is your errand?

The question confounded her the more, as the intention of her coming was to communicate to her father, the particular notice which the Baron had just taken of her, and to ask his direction. She hesitated. Nareskin wished to relieve her from the confusion he saw, and taking up the conversation, addressed himself to Demidoff. Camilla, said he, cannot have passed unnoticed the particular attentions of my heart; may I hope, she will

will not be displeased with the friendship you are pleased to shew me, in allowing me to avow my attachment.

She looked at her father with a timid suspense, as if she wished him to save her the reply. Well, says Demidoff, smiling, I see the matter is in a fair train; and taking Camilla's hand, which Nareskin received from him with transport, I wish, said the Knez, I could as surely secure the happiness of your future days, as I feel the satisfaction of the present. Then turning to the door, he left them a while, to finish that pleasing explanation, where he knew his presence must be a restraint.

From that day the Knez regarded him as his son, and Camilla, avowing to her father, that the Baron was far from indifferent to her, nothing seemed necessary to complete their union,
but

but the proper settlements, and the sacerdotal benediction.

Two months were elapsed since the Chamberlain had retired from court. He was unable longer to pretend indisposition. His attendance soon must be necessarily required. He felt his heart revolted at the thought of quitting Camilla. He trembled at the idea of returning to the Czarina.

As he could not delay, beyond another month, his appearance at court, he was very anxious that the indissoluble knot might be tied before his departure; whilst Demidoff rather thought, the matter had better not immediately be made public, but that Nareskin should first sound how it would be relished by the Czar, and endeavour to engage his favourable opinion of them. However, as Nareskin exceedingly urged the union, and Camilla felt reluctant now to part with

with him, at least till under the sacred bond, Demidoff consented they should be married privately.

A month fled as a day. The unwelcome hour arrived. Nareskin must go. Camilla wept. He cheered her with the tenderest attentions, and bid her hope, either soon to see him there, or to follow him with her father to Moscow. The distance was not great, she would hear of him every post.

Nareskin, the day after his arrival, appeared in his office with a countenance of health. He waited on the Czarina—He perceived a cloud cover her brow, which her forced complaisance could not conceal. The rumour of his attachment had fled before him to the court, where news, true or false, is sure to meet a ready reception. It had reached the Czari-
na's

na's jealous ear, and stung her to the heart.

As it was impossible, after what had passed, to avoid an eclairecissement on the subject, he prepared for the irksome task, and determined to avow what he had done, he avoided not an occasion that called him to attend the Czarina.

She was walking in the great gallery, and bidding him follow her, whilst her maids of honour were at a distance, Nareskin, said she, is it possible the report I hear should have any foundation, that Demidoff's daughter has seduced you? a man so obnoxious, and a creature so inferior!

Your Majesty, says he, will expect I speak the truth. I have engagements with her which death only can dissolve.

Her eyes flashed with fury and indignation. And dare you, said she, wretch,

wretch, avow it? what an idiot was I to deign to lavish my regards on so base a being! I deserve the contempt with which I am treated. She was proceeding—but instantly checked her rage, and with a look, that bespoke the settled revenge of her heart, ungratefulest of human beings, said she, I despise thy meanness, and will punish thy perfidy. And turning short, she hastened to her apartment; leaving him confounded and shocked, without ability to reply.

He returned agitated with reflections. He knew the implacable resentment he had provoked; and, he prepared to meet his fate, whatever it might be, by feeling some consolation, in the dissolution of such an unhallowed connection, whatever effects might flow from it. His conscience was more at ease, and his heart
relieved

relieved from a burden which had long oppressed him.

His office obliged him daily to attend the Czarina. He was received apparently as usual. By degrees a greater distance took place. It was perceived his favour was in the wane. The envy and ambition of his secret enemies seized the occasion. Every hand is ready at a court to thrust down the falling favourite.

The Chancellor Dolgornki had seen the growing greatness of Nareskin with particular jealousy. He was a man of boundless ambition, and insatiable rapacity. A large domain, which he possessed, was intersected by the estate of the Chamberlain, and as he had coveted to possess it, he had formerly made proposals to purchase, though at an undervaluation, what my grandfather wished not to part with for any consideration, as
being

being the inheritance of his ancestors. When he appeared a rising courtier, none caressed him with greater professions of friendship than the Chancellor. But the crafty saw through the veil; assured, that no man would feel more pleasure on his fall than Dolgornki. On him therefore the Czarina fixed, as the instrument of her vengeance; wishing not to appear herself as beneath her dignity.

Dolgornki, said she, one day, it grieves me to entertain those suspicions of my Chamberlain, which his conduct renders unavoidable. The connection of Nareskin with Demidoff's daughter, appears to me dangerous: and, if he be secretly gained by the male-contents, it would be highly impolitic to afford him the opportunities of doing mischief, with which his high office at court might furnish him. I know your zeal for
every

every thing, which concerns the Czar's safety, and my friendship for you, engages me to give you this hint, that the merit of the service may be yours: which the Czar, I am confident, will not leave unrewarded.

The Chancellor seized the occasion with transport; and thanking her Majesty for this signal instance of her friendship, assured her, it should be his immediate care, to prevent any consequences, that might be apprehended from the Chamberlain's disloyalty.

He was no sooner alone than he began to contrive, how to turn this matter to his own advantage. He had long cast an evil eye on the territory of Nareskin, and this seemed a favourable opportunity to seize the prey. If he could but raise suspicions in the mind of the Czar, and engage him

him to send Nareskin into banishment; his estates would be either confiscated, or, if sold, would come to him probably an easy purchase.

Dolgornki took occasion the first opportunity he had of being with the Czar, to introduce Demidoff, and the reputed disaffected party, with which he was said to be connected, and, said, he was sorry to hear there was lately an accession to their number, of a man, the last he should have suspected in the empire, as being so highly honoured by his Majesty and the Czarina.

The Czar started at the idea. It was a very tender part, knowing how he had mounted the throne. He bid him immediately name the person, and the grounds of his suspicion.

The Chancellor said, jealousy for his royal master, would not suffer him to be silent, or conceal his dearest

est friend, when his Majesty's nearest interests might suffer. The Chamberlain Nareskin, was said to have closely connected himself with the disaffected; and, as a seal of their union, had contracted himself to the daughter of Demidoff, a leader of the faction, he hoped the Czar would pardon him, if he erred, as solicitude for his safety alone, prompted him to give this intelligence; and, as the Chamberlain was the Czarina's immediate attendant, and so highly honoured by them both, he wished that her Majesty might be consulted on the subject.

The Czar, who tenderly loved the Czarina, and was greatly influenced by her, was unwilling hastily to disgrace an officer of her's, and one who had been always respected. He therefore mentioned to her the intelligence which Dolgornki had communicated,

municated, and wished to know her opinion on the matter.

She said, It grieved her to entertain suspicions of one, who had behaved so well ; but that the facts, taken together, appeared very dark. That Nareskin, under plea of ill health, which had been since found to be a mere pretence, had retired from court with her leave for some months. How he had employed the time, she knew not ; but that it was strongly reported, he had connected himself with the malcontents, and bound himself to them, by a contract with Demidoff's daughter. She should be sorry to have the Chamberlain disgraced ; but that, if the Czar thought it a right measure, to prevent the possibility of any ill consequences ensuing, he would use his own wisdom and authority, as she never wished to screen an officer of her household, who

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should

should incur his displeasure. No man had greater zeal for his person and government, than Dolgoruki; and none would give him more unprejudiced advice.

The Czarina well knew, if Nareskin's fate was put into Dolgoruki's hands, he had little to hope for.

The Chamberlain, who was ignorant of the plan laid to disgrace him, and had for a month met with no particular disrespect from the Czarina, whose face wore her accustomed smiles, thought it highly proper to inform the Czar of his marriage, and endeavour to restore the exiled Demidoff to his favour. He solicited an audience, and was appointed to attend his Majesty the following day.

Dolgoruki was with the Czar when the Chamberlain arrived; and he flattered himself, that from the Chancellor's friendship, who had made him the
deepest

deepest professions of serving him to the uttermost, he should easily obtain Demidoff's recall.

He had communicated, in confidence to the Chancellor, his intentions of soliciting the Czar on the subject, and hoped he was now facilitating that measure. But the uprightness of his own heart, hid from him the treachery of this courtier-friend.

Dolgoruki had been summoned by the Czar, to advise what measures were prudent to be taken in this affair. He pretended to be exceeding sorry for his friend Nareskin. Nothing, said he, positively criminal hath appeared against him.—Besides, he added, it became a monarch like his Majesty, to extend his clemency to the undeserving—if the tyger's teeth were drawn, and his claws pared, it effectually prevented him from doing

D 2

mischief.

mischief. What he had to propose, would at the same time cut off all possibility of harm to the peace of the kingdom, and ultimately promote its real benefit. To make settlements in Siberia, was of the highest importance, to secure the country to the Russian government, and render it profitable. Fixed deep in that wilderness, near some fortress, Nareskin could not possibly do harm. His advice, therefore, was, that he should be arrested on suspicion, and, as a matter of favour, afterwards indulged with carrying along with him, into any secure place of exile, the boors from his estates:—that his lands should be forfeited to the crown, and a sum advanced from the treasury of Tobolski, to provide necessaries for the infant settlement;—and that it should be death for Nareskin to be found without

without the limits of the territory allotted to him.

The Czar, politic as jealous of his enemies designs, cordially approved the advice, and gave Dolgoruki his warrant, to arrest Nareskin as he retired from the presence.

Dolgoruki being dismissed, Nareskin was admitted to the Czar. He apologized for the liberty he had taken.—He had often experienced his Majesty's kindness and favour, and it emboldened him to present a fresh request; the grant of which, he hoped his Majesty would never have cause to regret. It respected partly himself, partly a worthy man, who, most undeservedly, had long lain under suspicion and disgrace. The Knez Demidoff had requested him, when he spent the autumn in the country for his health, to become his advocate, that he might be restored

to his Majesty's presence ; and would count himself happy to spend his life in defence of his person and government. Nareskin added, that he was the more induced to comply with this request, as the amiable daughter of Demidoff had engaged his heart and hand, in which union he hoped he should find his Majesty's approbation, as the Knez effectually thereby separated himself from the party, which he had been formerly connected with, and had settled all his fortune on his daughter. He pledged himself, therefore, for his fidelity.

The Czar heard him attentively, and with emotion. Dolgoruki, said he, has spoken to me on this subject: I have given him my orders respecting it.

Nareskin bowed, and retired ; not doubting but that the Chancellor had succeeded for him, and wished to have

have the merit of communicating to him the Czar's favour.

But how great was his astonishment, when hastening impatiently to meet Dolgoruki, he heard him utter, "Nareskin, by the Czar's orders, I arrest you, as guilty of high treason."

Treason! cried Nareskin, God forbid. The idea of it never entered my heart. The officers of justice were ready; they seized and led him to the castle.

The news soon fled from the court to the country. Demidoff was informed of his son's disgrace, and was deeply afflicted. Camilla, from whom he thought it not fit to conceal the calamity, was inconsolable.

Nareskin remained in strict confinement. He felt from whose quiver this arrow had been drawn. The consciousness of his innocence of

every crime, that could be laid to his charge availed him little ; he knew the might and malignity of his enemies, and had every thing to apprehend from a woman of the Czarina's diabolical spirit. But his own situation affected him, not more than the apprehensions of the effect which the tidings must have on his dear Camilla, and her father. However he enjoyed one comfort which supported him in this hour of calamity. It was better to suffer than to sin. And he looked up to God, to over-rule for good the devices of his enemies.

The hours of suspense are always tedious ; but where life itself stands in doubt, how awful are the moments ! wishing to know his fate, yet dreading to be resolved ; Nareskin passed a week without a visitant, but the silent jailor who brought him his provisions.

On

“ On the eight morning, his prison door opened, and an officer addressed him. Sir, I am ordered by the Czar to attend you to your place of exile; my escort waits; it will be my pleasure, as far as my power extends, to soften the rigour of your fate, and afford you every accommodation in the journey.

Nareskin bowed and thanked him. I am ready, said he, to obey the Czar's orders. And though I am not conscious I have offended, yet considering the misrepresentations of my enemies, I am persuaded I am indebted to his clemency. May I ask by what road we travel, and whether I am permitted to write to any of my friends?

I have no order, Sir, to prevent you said the officer. Your route lies through your own estate, where you are to halt a few days, to make preparations for the removal of all your

peasants, who are to attend you. You are to land at the fort of Dolonska, and fix on a settlement any where within ten miles of the garrison; from which you are not to remove on pain of death. The necessaries will be provided to support you for a year, and I cordially wish you may find Siberia a more agreeable abode, than the present unfavourable aspect of your affairs may lead you to apprehend.

To one that dreaded a severer fate, however innocent, the indulgence given him appeared a favour, notwithstanding the loss of all besides. But his heart felt inexpressible bitterness at the idea of Camilla's sufferings. He had entire confidence in her affection, that she would not desert him; yet to leave her father bereaved, must be agonizing; and much want, distress, and difficulties

ties were before him, with which she had been little used to struggle. He begged to know if he might dispatch a line before him. It must be open, said the officer. It will contain no secrets, replied Nareskin, but to prepare the most excellent of her sex for the shock, which my abrupt appearance must give her.

They proceeded with the escort. The next day brought them in sight of the Villa. Camilla was at the gate. She flew to meet her husband, and fainted in his arms. Sorrow had filled her cup to the brim. Vexation and grief had brought on her father a fit of the gout, to which he was subject, and fixing on his head and stomach it had carried him off the preceding day.

He died in the true spirit of Christianity, commending his soul into the hands of his Saviour; forgiving
unfeignedly

unfeignedly the authors of their sufferings, and exhorting Camilla to approve her unchangeable fidelity to her husband, and to patient and chearful resignation to the hand of God, whose providential dispensations are all righteous and just, and ultimately work together for good to those that love him.

Nareskin received this afflicting news from Camilla, when she recovered, as her sobs and tears permitted utterance. He pressed her to his bosom, bid her hope to find in him, a father and a husband; and while he shared with her the inexpressible loss, encouraged her to bear up under the load, looking to him for help, who having laid this burden on them, could alone enable them to support it with Christian fortitude and humble submission.

His

His words were balmy to her heart. He kissed away the tear that started from her eye; and, though his heart agonized with sorrow, he suppressed the feeling of his own anguish, that he might not aggravate hers.

By the death of Demidoff, his estate became vested in my grandfather, and sunk with his own into the greedy jaws of that base, and insatiable wretch the Chancellor. As they were confiscated to the crown, the Czar, at the Czarina's request, granted them to Dolgoruki, as the reward of his zeal and fidelity, though in fact the wages of his perfidy and hypocrisy.

Let no man wonder at the imagined injustice of providence. This is not the world of judgment. The heirs of glory are trained up in the school of adversity.

When

When Nareskin had paid his last duty unto the worthy Knez by attending his corps to the grave, amidst the unfeigned tears of the peasants, by whom he was greatly beloved; the officer, in whose custody he was, urged him to prepare for his departure, as his stay was limited to a week, and the wretch Dolgoruki impatient to be in possession.

My grandfather was allowed to take with him, whatever was portable and useful for his future settlement; which, though the smallest part of his possessions, was in his circumstances very desirable. The barks were prepared to carry them down the Occa, as far as the Rama, from whence they were to be conveyed to Tobolski by land, and thence up the Irtysh to the fort of Dolonska. The Governor of Siberia having orders to supply them with beasts, tools, instruments

struments of husbandry, and grain, till they had reaped a harvest sufficient for their provision.

Camilla, after the first burst of agony was over, supported her situation with heroic resolution. She became the comforter of her husband, and strove by every tender endearment to alleviate his sorrows. Her noble heart, in the midst of abundance, had ever sat loose to the sordid considerations of interest; and the accounts, which her father had given her of courts, made her glad that her lot should not be cast there. She had a natural fund of good spirits, and that cheerfulness of temper which turned from the painful ideas, that would arise to the real comforts which remained. She had Nareskin, and but for his sake, she scarce wished for more.

The

The peasants adored their master. He had treated them with tenderness and humanity; nor suffered his stewards to harass or oppress them. They would have cheerfully followed him to the end of the earth. It was indeed unpleasant to them to quit their native cottages, and the scenes endeared to them from their youth up; but there was scarce a man who did not feel his own grief swallowed up, in concern for their noble patron; of whose innocence they were fully convinced, and whose losses they bitterly regretted: reduced from magnificence, to seek his bread in an uncultivated wilderness. They assembled round him. The old peasants wept aloud. All assured him, wherever their habitation should be fixed, he should want nothing that their most vigorous labour could supply.

The

The appointed morning came. They embarked in the shallops provided for them. A tear stole down the cheek of Nareskin, as he turned his back on that endeared abode, which he must henceforth see no more. Camilla leaned on his arm. She saw his anguish. Her own heart felt an equal share. But she was supported beyond hope.

Nareskin, said she, all is well. Think from what snares you escape. Your enemies will be far from you in Siberia. And I am with you. My life shall be employed to make you forget your sufferings. Who knows the blessings of the abode, which providence hath allotted to us? but whatever awaits us, you are a Christian, to repine is to rebel against the divine government.

He felt the force of her arguments, lifted up the hand that was on his
arm

arm to his lips, and impressing on it a fervent kiss, my dear Camilla, said he, I am a man, and feel the infirmity of my nature ; but with thee, my good angel, I shall be more than man, and learn to smile at grief. May the presence of him, who led his people through the wilderness of old, go with us, and then the banks of the Irtysh shall be as Canaan.

His countenance brightened. He suppressed the passion that was rising. A placid resignation succeeded. He remembered the Czarina, and was thankful so vast a distance would separate them. He stepped forward with alacrity, and entering the bark with a pleasing composure, committed himself, and all his concerns, to the great Preserver of men.

They were carried swiftly down the stream into the Volga, but ascended the Rama with greater difficulty.

It

It was more than a month before they reached Tobolski, where they halted some days, in order to prepare for a fresh embarkation; as they were now to be furnished with all the necessaries for the settlement appointed them in Siberia. They were entertained with great humanity by the governor. Their fate excited pity, and as it was generally understood to be the effect of court intrigue, none regarded Nareskin as a criminal.

Some months elapsed before they could reach Dolonskay, the place of their destination. The officers of the garrison received the unfortunate exiles with much politeness. As the autumn was far advanced, a party of the garrison was ordered to assist the peasants, in erecting the necessary huts for their winter abode, and making provision of fuel against that inclement season, which even here
in

in this southern situation is sufficiently severe.

My grandfather, with his dear Camilla, immediately went to view the country, and fix upon the spot of their future residence; as all was unoccupied for hundreds of leagues around, except by occasional visits of the roaming hords of Tartars.

They had passed the voyage in those proper reflections and converse, which had reconciled them to their fate. Their hearts were wrapped up in each other. They resolved in spite of their enemies to be happy, and possessed the means for it most abundantly. Their mutual love was a perpetual enjoyment; and even all the real comforts of life were here within their reach. The country was beautiful and fertile: a little culture would amply supply their wants. They could not expect their former magnificence,

ficence, and must be content with less intercourse with the world: the latter seemed no great hardship, and the former, they felt not at all essential to their comfort.

The spot where we now are, struck them with its grandeur and beauty; and they resolved to fix in this place their future abode.

The whole of this elevation was then covered with wood: they cleared the space you see around us; and with the oak they felled, erected the house where we reside, and the huts for the peasants below. Indeed at first only a part of it was built. The wings and colonades which join them to the centre, were afterwards added.

The Czarina doubted not but exile, disgrace, and want, would embitter the days of Nareskin, and make him curse his foolish connection; and that this lingering punishment to him, would

would be the severest vengeance she could inflict. She enjoyed the malignant pleasure of having made him as miserable as human being could be; and of having involved her rival in his wretchedness, confident that their sufferings would cool their ardour, and their distresses, as is often the case, issue in mutual upbraidings: but she was mistaken.

Nareskin's heart had been benefited by his afflictions; his mind grew more serious than the air of a court can well admit. He looked beyond the grave, which he had seldom thought of before; and possessing in Camilla every enjoyment of the most endeared society, he resolved to employ himself in the cultivation of the wild around him, and as the father of the great family which attended him, to lay out himself for their good.

He was also delighted with the prospect of becoming a parent in a still tenderer

tenderer connection. Camilla had proved pregnant, and my father came into the world the first native Russian in that newly planted colony. Her labour was severe, and her accommodations but indifferent. Her life was in the utmost danger, and Nareskin beyond measure afflicted. He scarce parted from her bed-side night or day : but youth and a good constitution overcame the shock. She recovered by degrees, to the inexpressible joy of my grandfather ; tho' her frame received such injury, that she increased her family no more. You may judge the son was a darling, and shared the tenderest care and attention of both : a source of constant amusement, and a fresh cement of union and endearment.

The winter passed without heaviness ; the woods afforded plenty of game, the rivers of fish ; and furnished

ed at the same time an agreeable amusement in the pursuit of them. The buildings advanced whenever the weather admitted; and Camilla pleased herself with the arrangement of her household affairs, welcoming her dear Nareskin with a smile, when he returned from the chase, or the survey of his workmen, and cheering him with her sprightliness and good humour. Her lute had attended them into Siberia: my grandfather had judged it would there afford them amusement in their solitude; and, as he was a proficient himself on the viol di gamba, they frequently entertained themselves with harmony.

The spring approaching, called for the vigorous exertions of the peasants, to prepare the ground, and make provision for succeeding years. Nareskin, when he could leave his dear Camilla in a state of convalescence, directed

directed and overlooked their labours.

Camilla, as soon as able, accompanied her husband in his walks, and when her little charge could dispense with her attendance on him, she delighted to hang on his arm, and to visit the growing improvements, to which her company added fresh delight.

The houses of the peasants were soon rendered more comfortable against another winter. His own received during the summer considerable improvement, and as he wished to have a place for divine worship, he laid the foundation of that church, which you see yonder, the finishing of which was the work of several years, as their necessary avocations occasioned frequent interruptions of the building.

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At

At the distance of half a mile from the settlement, within a grove of thick evergreens, an area was cleared and fenced for a cemetery. He resolved that neither the church he was erecting, nor its environs should ever be infected by cadaverous effluvia. He deemed it not only indecent to make the mansion of the living God, the receptacle of the carcases of the dead, but highly injurious to the health of his rising colony, to have the air vitiated by putrid exhalations, and the very acts of prayer and praise rendered deleterious to the worshippers. They had discovered during the winter, that the woods abounded with wild bees, which lodged themselves in the hollows of trees, and laid up there their winter stores, which the bears sought with avidity and plundered. They procured a considerable quantity for use; and to increase
their

their future supply, they hollowed out a multitude of trees, and leaving a small apperture for the entrance of the bees, stopped up the end so effectually that the bears could not enter. Ever since there has been enough and to spare: and the wax hath proved a profitable export, and with the furs of the wild beasts with which the woods abound, furnished the little colony with exports, by the sale of which on the Irtysh, a return was procured sufficient to supply their wants.

In these placid and amusing employments, the years passed unobserved, and the day never seemed too long. Besides a visit now and then from the officers of the garrison, they saw no company, nor needed it. They felt in themselves, and the little circle of their cares and amusements, sufficient for their happiness. My

father constituted no small part of it. He began to speak and trot about after my grandfather, and was, as you may suppose, the idol of the village. Every possible care was taken of his infant education, whilst the examples before him most powerfully seconded the instructions which he received, and inculcated the practice of every virtue.

The church in about four years was completed, and a priest sent from Tobolski to perform the sacred rites. As my grandfather made it a point, that all should attend divine service on the Sabbath, and was ever present with his own family, the auditory was numerous and attentive. The priest was not a man of letters, but seriously devoted to his charge. I am sorry to say, we have since been worse provided: as my father, in whose time the first good pastor died,

died, was not so careful in his choice.

When my father's infant mind opened for instruction, my grandfather became his master at his hours of leisure, and he entered on the elements of science; but alas! the fatal hour approached that was to deprive him of the best of parents. When he was just entered his thirteenth year, death removed the good Narefkin after a few days illness. Camilla was inconsolable for his loss. The grief seized her heart. She lingered some months under an atrophy; and went before the close of the year to join her happy husband.

THE
HISTORY OF THE NARESKIN.

CHAPTER II.

MY father, left an orphan, was committed to the care of an old and faithful steward, who had been many years in that office.

He was a man of singular integrity, and uncommon understanding, and managed the concerns of his young master with the greatest diligence and success. But he had lost in his father the invaluable tutor, the authority sweetened by paternal tenderness, and the noble pattern he should imitate. Loosened from all restraints, as at his age, attention to study and mental improvements is usually counted irksome, he soon forgot the little
he

he had learnt, and spent his time in the chace, and the like amusements, which the country afforded him, leaving the entire care of all his affairs in the hands of old Debroski his steward.

Debroski and his family lived in the house with my grandfather; and were all in some trust or office under him. He treated the old man with much respect; often admitted him to his table, and testified the perfect confidence, which he reposed in him, by bequeathing my father and his affairs to his trust, in case his dear Camilla should not live till his son was of age.

The eldest son of Debroski had died some time before, and left an only daughter under his father's care. She was nearly of an age with her young master; and Camilla who superintended the village school, and

acted in some sort as the directress, was pleased with her figure and smartness, and had her taught to read and work, intending her to be about her own person.

Having lost her patroness, she abode with her mother who was the house-keeper. My father saw her every day. They were indulged in childish plays, and often sported together. They insensibly grew fond of each other, before they knew what love meant; and as their age advanced, when a greater decorum was necessary, he continued to pay her every tender attention.

It could not escape the mother's eye, that her daughter had an interest in her young master's heart. She admonished her to be on her guard. The distance of her rank made her fear least Nareskin might beguile her into some disgraceful connection; and

and she was ever inculcating upon her, that the only portion she could call her own, was her virtue. That if the Knez's intentions were honourable, he must esteem, or he would not long be fond of her; and if they were not, she had better serve with the most laborious peasant's daughter, than be the slave of her master's passions.

Colume, for that was her name, assured her mother, she would endeavour to profit by her instructions, and though she could not answer for the prepossessions of her heart, she hoped she should preserve her virtue untainted.

My father was now advancing to manhood, and felt the passions of youth. Colume had of late been more reserved than usual, and less frequently in his way. He grew im-

patient at it, and chid her for withdrawing herself from him.

One day, on his return from the chace, finding her alone, he caught her in his arms, sportively, now, says he, I have you, my captive; will you submit or struggle?

Fye, said she, Sir, how can you be so rude. Pray let me go. What would persons say if they saw me here. I have but a slender portion, that I can call my own, and would you rob me of it?

He vowed he meant every thing honourable by her, that he had loved her from a child, and that he could not live without her. Could she not trust him?

At that instant Debroski, ignorant that his young master was returned, opened the door. Confusion covered the young couple. The steward started with surprize. Is this, Sir, said he,

he, the reward of my fidelity? would you basely sacrifice the comfort and peace of a family, that hath served your house so many years, for the brutal gratification of a moment?

My father was quite abashed. He was conscious he had acted wrong. It was not design, nor a habit of vice, but a sudden temptation that had hurried him away. He really loved Columbe. Peace, Debroski, said he, I protest this dear creature is essential to my happiness, and I solemnly declare, I am this moment ready to join my hand with hers in indissoluble union.

Columbe had got loose and was fled. Debroski shook his head. My dear master, said he, though I feel the disgrace would be insupportable of seeing my child your mistress, yet I can by no means consent to so unequal an alliance. I have hitherto served you faithfully, and you have never yet had occasion to reproach me,

me. I sincerely mean you never shall. I will remove Columbe far hence that you may forget her, and I hope you will look out for a partner, more suited to your rank among the noble families, that are settled or sojourners in Dolonska.

The Knez could not bear the idea of Columbe's removal. Debroski, says he, you will make me desperate, if you attempt to secrete her. I will search her out though at the peril of my life. Whom have I to please in my choice but myself? and where can I find an object more worthy? I might add, that I have obligations to you, that would make me proud to enoble your posterity.

Remonstrances were vain. The steward was perfectly upright in his heart. He resisted with real zeal what he felt a dishonour to his young master. But when he saw he prevailed

vailed nothing, but rather irritated Nareskin to fury, he begged it as a favour, that he would take one year to consider of the matter, and suffer her to be absent: and if at the end of it, he persisted in the same intentions, he would submit to his pleasure.

The Knez with difficulty consented to so long a period. The steward was importunate and prevailed: but under the most solemn engagements that no influence should be employed with her, and that she should remain in the house, from which Debroski had threatened to remove her.

As it was agreed Nareskin should not see her alone, their interviews were always in her grandfather's or mother's presence. His affection continued unabated. He persisted in his intentions of making her his wife, and having impatiently waited for the day prefixed, the nuptial benediction
was

was pronounced by the priest of the village.

My father continued exceeding fond of his lady, and all the time, which he could spare from his sports, was spent in her company, or with his children whom he delighted in. She had a numerous family, and was an excellent mother, as far as her knowledge extended. They underwent repeated afflictions in the loss of several of their children, I only survived to comfort them.

I was very young when my father died by a fall from his horse, as he pursued a falcon, which had darted at his quarry. By this accident the care of me and his estate devolved on my afflicted mother.

THE
HISTORY OF THE NARESKIN.

CHAPTER III.

I WAS the darling of my mother; she could not spare me out of her sight. I was brought up without the happy advantages of education. The want of which I now sensibly regret, when I am too old to retrieve them.

She was, very naturally, afraid, I might, as my father had done, fix my regards on some of my own peasants: and wished, as soon as I advanced to manhood, to find me a partner more suited to my rank in life. The daughter of a colonel in the garrison engaged her attention. She had no fortune. Her father, though nobly born, was a
younger

younger brother, and drew all his provision from the sword he bore.

As she had, early in life, lost her mother, she was his peculiar care, and attended him in all his garrison residences, and wherever he was, unless in time of war, when he left her a while a pensioner in a monastery.

Her figure was noble; it is still so. Her features regular. And she danced and sung most agreeably. But her knowledge in the sciences scarce exceeded my own, though much more conversant in the world than I had been.

My mother proposed her as a most agreeable partner for me, and if my heart accorded with her wishes, doubted not the colonel would be happy in seeing his daughter so well provided for.

We visited them at the fort. The colonel always received us with politeness.

liteness. An intimacy commenced between us. The oftener I saw, the more I was charmed with the amiable daughter of Count Osterman. My attentions appeared not disagreeable to her. Through my mother a proposal was made to the Colonel, and as his approbation was obtained without difficulty, the dear Fatima consented to be mine.

Her noble father was pleased to express himself happy in seeing her so comfortably settled; and said, he should now die in peace. Which indeed was soon the case, as he departed in the garrison not more than two months after our marriage.

The precious girl you saw is the only fruit of our union, given for our comfort many years after our marriage, when we almost despaired of such a blessing, and you may judge how dear she is to us both. But it
is

is a daily concern to us, to see her noble faculties opening, without the ability of ministering to her improvement.

In dancing and needle-work her mother hath given her lessons, and found her a ready scholar. She has a sweet voice, and a taste for music. But her grandmother's lute, with the strings broken, stands in the study as useless lumber, which I am sure her fingers, if taught, would soon run over with delight. And the good old Nareskin's books occupy still the shelves, the most of them to us in an unknown tongue. Neither of us, unhappily, having sufficient knowledge to profit by them. Your charitable labours, gentlemen, to kindle up the sparks of science among us, are not unknown to me, and you will probably believe me sincere, when I tell you, that I mean to put every attraction

traction in my power, in your way, to draw you often hitherward : hoping that we all, especially my dear Eloisa, may profit by your superior intelligence, and disturb the repose of my grandfather's books and instruments, and of Camilla's music and lute.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STUDY.

THE Swedes were charmed and affected with the relation, and thanked him for the singular pleasure which he had given them. They assured him they should count it their delight to increase the enjoyments of his amiable family; and as far as their little knowledge reached, they should be happy to communicate it.

I am

I am impatient, said the Knez, to have the school opened, and only wish the scholars proficiency may equal the master's ability. Can I prevail upon you to enter upon your office without delay, and spare me another day, to survey the unknown treasures contained in the study, and examine whether the instruments, by long disuse, are not yet irreparable.

The Baron Rosen politely assured him, it would be a pleasure to oblige him, and that his friend Crucius or he would endeavour to initiate them into some of the mysteries of science.

Nareskin's countenance was covered with delight. He seized the Baron's hand; half my possessions would I give with pleasure, said he, to have my dear Eloisa emerge from the clouds of ignorance. As for myself, it is almost too late in the day; yet I shall try hard to catch a spark from
you.

you. Then rising, for the evening approached, he conducted them to the castle, where they found the amiable mother and daughter ready to receive them.

The table was plentifully covered, and the conversation sprightly and agreeable. Nareskin failed not to acquaint his wife and daughter with the conversation, which had passed that evening. And Fatima and Eloisa were as delighted as himself, in the kind intentions of the noble Swedes towards them, and assured their generous instructors, that if their improvement did not correspond with their wishes, the fault would lie not on their want of diligence, but their lack of ability.

The next day, when breakfast was ended, the Knez took the Swedes into his grandfather's study. The books were rather in disorder, and
covere^d

covered with dust. Their number was not great. But the collection was choice and useful. Some manuscripts of the Chamberlain curious and entertaining. A few volumes of the best music of his day in good preservation. For, though not used, the room had been kept aired and dry. In one corner stood the viol di gamba, in its case with one string yet remaining. The lute was in greater disorder, though yet reparable. And as in that remote place musical instruments were difficult to be obtained, these, antiquated as they were, appeared a treasure.

The ladies had now joined the party, and Nareskin was impatient to make a beginning. Gentlemen, said he, this is the school-room and the scholars are in attendance, will you favour us with an introductory lecture?

You

You are, says the Baron, smiling, eager to begin. But you will do well to consider that the first steps in the road of science are the most unpleasant, and apparently intricate. After some progress the rough path grows smoother, and the prospect brightens as you advance. You must not therefore be discouraged, if at first your improvement does not answer your own expectations. Patient perseverance will be crowned with success. You read and write, I presume. Myself but badly, said the Russian.

Here then we must begin, said the Swede. A short time, with diligence and attention, will, with what you already know, qualify you for an entrance on the study of useful literature. I do not think an attempt to be an adept in the languages, though highly desirable is necessary; the time required for that being considerable.

derable. With your native Russian tongue, you may learn enough of history and geography to enlarge the circle of your knowledge; I mention these only as singularly useful and amusing; to grasp at more, might probably, at least in the beginning distract, confuse, and discourage.

Your Eloisa may, if she pleases, at the same time try her fingers on the lute. And, if I may judge by the music of her voice, I doubt not she will soon be a proficient.

You may have a better specimen of it, says her father, if her bashfulness before such masters does not prevent her. Eloisa, my dear, favour us with that little air your mother taught you, some time since, which I am so fond of.

I will obey you, Sir, said she, blushing, with pleasure. But I am afraid
the

the specimen may not prove so promising a presage, as your partiality would suggest; and without farther difficulty she sung,

Sweet content and balmy peace,
Dwell beneath my humble cot,
Bid my troubled spirit cease,
Ever to regret my lot.

Welcome wild! vain world adieu!
Hither by kind Heaven sent,
Dearest friends to dwell with you,
Balmy peace and sweet content.

The Swedes were charmed. A voice so melting, plaintive and expressive they had never heard.

Madam, says, Crucius, you pretend to be a scholar, when you are really already a mistress. Rosen, added he, it must be confessed the melody of the human voice is infinitely beyond

F

all

all the sounds, that can be drawn from inanimate matter.

I never, said the Baron, received so full a conviction of that truth before. If, Madam, your fingers keep pace with your voice, you will quickly leave your masters far behind you.

Nareskin looked complacent, and Eloisa abashed by their admiration, with a smile of modesty observed, you do well, Baron, to encourage a beginner. I am afraid the time may come when my dulness may make you repent the task you have undertaken.

Fatima turned the conversation. You are so intent on the improvements you propose Nareskin, said she, that you forget your office, as the master of the house is to entertain your guests, not engage them to wait on you. The day is fine, they probably would wish to enjoy it abroad.

We

We can spend it no where so agreeably Madam, said Crucius, as in the present company, and employed in any services the Knez shall be pleased to signify.

Were I to gratify my own impatience, said Nareskin, I should confine you, gentlemen, to the castle; and weary you with teaching. But as I mean to make it as agreeable as possible, to draw you here the oftener, I will not disgust you at a first visit. The horses are ready, if you choose to take a ride before dinner, and survey our little settlement. Yet not forgetting business, as I shall enquire what books I must procure, and as you see the shattered state of this instrument, we will call in our way on an ingenious man, my carpenter, who under your directions, perhaps, may prepare it for being strung.

F 2 The

The ladies were in an open chaise. The gentlemen on horseback. They rode some miles through a country beautifully variegated with different scenes of hill and valley, wood, lawn, and water: and returning through the village, which was very considerable, brought with them the mechanic to the castle. The directions were given him, which he was ordered with all expedition to execute, and the dinner hour approaching, they sat down with high good humour; perfectly satisfied in each other. The Swedes in the discovery of so agreeable a family, and the Russians in the acquisition of the society of men, so singularly engaging in themselves, and from whom they hoped to draw so much knowledge and improvement.

In the evening, the strangers took their leave and departed for the garrison; but not till they had promised a speedy

a speedy return, and to bring with them proper books for a beginning, and such strings as the instruments wanted, which their own stores enabled them to supply.

The pleasure of being useful was a real reward, and the obligations which they conferred, by communicating their attainments, made them many grateful friends.

The tedious hours of captivity were amused in these employments. Crucius had a fine taste for drawing and painting, and Rosen excelled in music. They devoted a part of their time every day to give lessons in these arts, and amidst their other avocations, they forgot not their engagements with Nareskin.

Eloisa's lute was strung and proper books provided. Their eager desire to improve made them exceedingly

F 3 attentive.

attentive. Eloisa's fingers swept the strings ; and as music was her taste, in preference to painting, the teaching her naturally devolved on Rosen.

Two and sometimes three days in the week were spent at Nareskin's castle. Often a party from the garrison accompanied them. But whatever pursuits, the chace, the fishery, or other rural sports engaged them, they never parted without some useful lessons of instruction, read by Rosen or Crucius. An entertainment infinitely more rational, than the foolish amusements, which too frequently murder the time of the polite and affluent. Nareskin himself was never tired of hearing, and Eloisa's thirst for knowledge seemed increased by every fresh attainment.

Under the repeated lessons of these able masters, they began to entertain
new

new ideas of the terraqueous globe. Its motion, size, revolutions, and divisions. They travelled by the finger over the various seas and continents, the kingdoms and states, into which they were divided, dwelling a while on each as they passed, not forgetting their dear Sweden, the land of their nativity.

The Study of Nareskin afforded some able authors in ancient history, and the Swedes supplied the modern. Especially dwelling on the states of Russia and Sweden, as peculiarly interesting to them, and highly necessary to be known. As every native must feel himself most deeply concerned in the events, which relate to his own country. Nor was Siberia forgotten; a very fair manuscript of the Chamberlain's, relating the first discovery and conquest of that country, particularly

cularly delighted them. It was entitled, *The Life of Yarmak*. The Swedes had taken it with them to the fort, and found it so amusing that they failed not to communicate to their friends, the pleasure they had received in the perusal; and being seated one evening round the cheerful hearth, Crucius, at the request of the company, read the entertaining history.

THE
HISTORY OF YARMAK.

PART I.

CHAPTER. I.

VELIKA

YARMAK was the son of a Cossack, whose numerous herds fed on the extensive plains, which lie between the Don and the Volga. Very early in life he gave the most promising specimens of undaunted courage; and, as he advanced to manhood, was distinguished for activity and expertness in every martial exercise. His arrows flew with unerring swiftness to the mark.—His lance

—pierced the wild boar and the elk.—
His horse appeared as winged in the chace;—and when an excursion was ordered by the Hettman, against any neighbouring hord of Tartars, none hastened with greater eagerness to join the squadron, or returned with higher applause of his bravery and conduct.

His person was tall and majestic—his complexion swarthy like his hord—but his features more prominent, and his nose more elevated than the round and disgustfully flat countenances of his countrymen.

His noble appearance, and high reputation, attracted the notice of Chorlu the son of Mazeppa, the Hettman of the Cossacks. He invited him to his tent, on their return together from a successful expedition, and professed that he should count himself supremely happy to engage his friendship.

ship. From that time, they became inseparable companions in the chase, and every warlike excursion. Each returning day seemed to cement their union and increase their attachment.

Chorlu had an only sister, among the Cossacks, esteemed beautiful. Dark, though less swarthy than her companions—her black hair hung in ringlets down her shoulders—her eyes large and brilliant—her features animated, and marked with striking sensibility—her person elegant—her stature rather above the common size—her arms turned with perfect symmetry—her hand soft, and dimpled as her cheek; and her heart, though a barbarian, susceptible of the tenderest impressions.

Yarmak's friendship with her brother led him often to the tent of Mazeppa; where he had frequent opportunities of seeing the amiable Cossack.

Cossack. The report, which was universal, of his bravery—the gracefulness of his person—the amiableness of his manners—attracted involuntarily the notice of Velika: and to her brother's friend every kind attention seemed but complaisance to him. Thus insensibly giving way to a propensity, the real motive of which, she herself at first never suspected, her assiduity to please and render herself agreeable, won the heart of Yarmak; and he felt the glowing passion kindling in his bosom.

The distance of their rank—the favours he had received from Mazepa—the friendship of Chorlu—all pleaded the necessity of resisting an attachment, which might probably involve him in many sorrows, and either torment him with the impotent desires of hopeless love, or plunge him into difficulties, the consequences of which
were,

were, on every account, to be apprehended. He resolved therefore instantly to suppress the rising flame, and combat a passion, that indulged, must prove his misery ; if concealed, or if discovered, expose him to the evils he most dreaded ; the loss of Chorlu's friendship, and the indignation of Mazeppa. Besides, how great the improbability of success, and the vanity of the hope, that Velika would stoop to one so much her inferior !

The struggle was difficult : but his resolution enabled him to make a vigorous effort to break the charm. Determined to try, if absence from the endeared object might not remove the pain he felt in hopeless love, he frequented less the tent of Mazeppa : and when Chorlu's friendship chid him for his absence, he pleaded a variety of excuses.—Yet all his efforts were vain—neither the
chace

chace—nor martial exercises—the care of his horses—his falcons—or his grey-hounds—could efface the deep impression, or turn his thoughts from the object of his affections.

Mazeppa had appointed a royal hunt, and Chorlu summoned Yarmak to the field. Velika, that day, was mounted next her father, and wondering at Yarmak's unusual absence from their tents, felt a pleasing eagerness to join the party, where Yarmak had been invited to attend.

The country between the Don and the Volga, where the Cossacks roam, is interspersed with woods, that abound with game of every kind; hares, antelopes, elk, and wild boar. In time of peace, the chace is their chief exercise and darling amusement. The hunters form a crescent, and narrowing the horses inclose their prey. Some persons with dogs are
dispatched

dispatched to rouse them from their cover, and as they attempt to escape they are shot with arrows, or struck with lances.

Velika, with her quiver and bow, like Diana, had dealt her shafts successfully among the feebler tribes; and, animated by the sport, perhaps pleased to distinguish herself in the presence of Yarmak, had advanced from the circle into the thicket. When unexpectedly a wild boar roused by her approach, rushed on her horse, and with his tusks ripping up its belly, he reared, and fell backward.

The shrieks of Velika alarmed the company, and Yarmak, agitated with irresistible eagerness, rushed to the spot, at the moment when the furious animal was ready to attack the fallen huntress. He sprung from his horse, and stepping between the beast and his prey, received the boar on his

his spear, and stopped his career. The company were at hand and in an instant dispatched him.

Velika immediately engaged their attention, though not dangerously hurt by her fall, she was at first unable to rise. All eagerly pressed around her with their enquiries, and Yarmak's tender anxiety, though unperceived by others amidst the general confusion, did not escape her observation. The hunting ceased.— They conveyed her on a litter to the tents of Mazeppa, and in a few days she appeared abroad perfectly recovered.

But Yarmak's image had now left an indelible impression on her heart, before she had felt a pleasure in his company, and delight, at hearing his praise: but now his ardor to rescue her—his eagerness to expose himself to danger—his anxious solicitude
least

least she should have received hurt by her fall—and something in his countenance that betrayed the sentiments of his heart—all conspired to kindle in her bosom a passion, too mighty to be resisted. In vain her pride, her rank, her expectations pleaded against her choice. She felt, that Yarmak possessed qualities, which in her estimation, infinitely outweighed whatever wealth or grandeur could offer; but her father, she well knew, would not see with her eyes—and Chorlu, though his friend, would never brook so unequal an alliance. Perhaps, she might have mistaken also Yarmak's sensibility—a thousand obstacles presented themselves on every side. Alternate hope and despair agitated the daughter of Mazepa.

A dangerous irruption of the Kalmucks, into the territories of the Hettman,

Hettman, had, just at this time, spread a general alarm. Mazeppa summoned his warriors to the field. Chorlu commanded, and Yarmak was appointed to serve under him.

Before his departure, business called Yarmak to the tent of the Hettman. Velika was there. Her father was called to the council of war, to be held by the antients of the people. Yarmak was ordered to wait his return.

Never before had Yarmak been exposed to so critical a situation; and Velika felt a palpitation difficult to conceal. A silence, which spoke their mutual embarrassment, was at last, interrupted by Velika.

“Yarmak,” said she, “the obligations I owe you, for your late intrepid interposition between me and danger, have deserved an earlier acknowledgment.” “Princess,” replied

replied the Cossack, " had my life
" been offered in that service, I
" should have counted it happily em-
" ployed." " You are too prodigal
" of it," said Velika, " and I shudder
" when I think of the perils, to
" which my brother is about to ex-
" pose himself with you. These
" horrid wars! how many miserable
" beings do they make!" " There
" are as miserable beings, Princess,
" said Yarmak, with a sigh, in the
" bosom of peace. In many situa-
" tions, life itself becomes a burden,
" and to fall in the bed of honour, is
" coveted as a deliverance. My sabre,
" I trust, shall open its way into the
" thickest ranks of our enemies, and
" if victory crown our standards,
" Yarmak will be content to be
" numbered with the slain."

An involuntary tear stole down the
cheek of Velika. Yarmak saw it fall
on

on her bosom, and felt a conflict in his own, too visible to be concealed. Mazeppa's return interrupted the silence which ensued.

“ Go, said he, to Yarmak, prepare for the field to-morrow. You are appointed to lead the squadron in the van. Our intelligence is alarming. The bravery of my Cossacks must rescue their country from servitude. I know your courage, and doubt not that Yarmak's name will be distinguished whether in death or victory.”

Velika turned away her face. Mazeppa was too much engaged to notice her agitation; and Yarmak modestly replying, that he trusted he should not disappoint the honourable opinion, which the Hettman entertained of his fidelity, touched the earth with his forehead and retired.

They

They must feel as Velika, who would conceive the exquisite anxiety in which she spent the remainder of that day. She retired to her apartment,—dismissed her women attendants—swallowed up with reflections on the interview which had passed, and filled with the horrors of those dangers which awaited the object of her tenderest cares.

After many a struggle, she could no longer resist the impulse she felt. It would be some relief to her agitated mind.—She hoped, also, it might operate as a preservative on the too adventurous Yarmak. She took the leaf of the bullrush, and with trembling hand inscribed on it,

“YARMAK, IN THE BATTLE REMEMBER VELIKA, AND LIVE.”

She confided it to the care of the trusty Amama, her attendant. In the dusk

dusk of the evening, she conveyed it to the tent of Yarmak.

He was sitting alone: his head pensively resting on his hand: a glimmering lamp stood beside him: lost in thought, he revolved the scene of the day past: agitated by alternate hope and fear—and less apprehensive of the dangers which awaited him in the field, than of having incurred, by betraying his presumption, the displeasure of Velika.

Judge, then, the delight with which he read the leaf conveyed to him. He ardently pressed it to his lips, laid it in his bosom, and vowed, however his fortune was beneath her dignity, his actions at least should prove him not unworthy the choice of the daughter of Mazeppa.

In such a situation of mind, sleep could find no admission. A thousand pleasing imaginations, mixed with solicitude

licitude and fear, made the hours of the night steal away unperceived, and the dawn of day, awakening him from this tumult of ideas, he mounted his horse, and hastened to the field.

CHAPTER II.

THE KALMUCKS.

THE Kalmucks had advanced by forced marches to within one day's distance from the Hettman's tents. There was not a moment to be lost. Yarmak with a thousand Cossacks was ordered to advance, whilst Chorlu followed with the body of the army.

The smoke of the enemy's camp ascended. Their van-guard occupied a rising ground. Yarmak in the evening was only four versts distant from them.

them. He adventured, as near as possible, to reconnoitre their situation; and found the enemy entrenched on both wings, and protected in front by the hillock which their advanced guard had occupied. The moment was critical. His frequent excursions in the chase had given him a perfect acquaintance with the ground. To attack them in front, appeared highly hazardous; but by a considerable circuit, through a pass which he knew on the left, he was persuaded it was very practicable to fall on the rear of the Kalmuck camp by break of day: whilst Chorlu with the body of the army advanced to occupy the ground where he had pitched his tents, in order to support the attack.

He communicated his ideas to the general; and having received his approbation to carry it into execution, no sooner was the evening set in, than
leaving

leaving his tents standing, to which by midnight, Chorlu with the army advanced, Yarmak with his chosen squadron, by a rapid march, turned the right wing of the Kalmucks, and at break of day, as had been agreed, fell with irresistible impetuosity on the rear of their camp.

The noise and tumult no sooner manifested that the attack was begun, than Chorlu pushed his troops forwards to the ascent of the hill, and seconding bravely the efforts of Yarmak, the Kalmucks were entirely broken and fled.

When the resistance ceased, the gallant Cossack stayed his victorious troops, and his humanity prevented the carnage too common among barbarians. The camp was taken, the prisoners numerous, the booty great.

Yarmak had distinguished himself in the battle by astonishing efforts of
G bravery;

bravery ; and to his valour, as well as skill, the honour of the victory could not but be attributed. His handful of men had been nearly overpowered by numbers, before the body of the army could penetrate to join them. He had rallied and led them on repeatedly to the attack,—animated them by his example,—and though wounded by a sabre, which took off part of his scalp, and laid bare his skull, he dealt out death on every side. But scarce had he turned his horse from the pursuit, than, amidst the shouts of victory, he sunk down on his saddle, exhausted with the loss of blood, and the fatigue he had undergone ; and was carried to the nearest tent, in appearance almost expiring.

Immediate applications were made to the wound. The fainting had stopped the effusion of blood ;—and a draught

draught of warm mare's milk, the Cossacks sovereign cordial, revived him. His danger, for some days, was imminent; but the issue was successful. The fever abated,—the wound filled up,—his strength began to return, and he was able to bear a litter.

His conduct, courage, and success, soon fled to the court of the Hettman, and withal the imminent danger of his situation. Velika, impatient to hear the tidings, could scarce suppress the violence of her anguish; and, whilst in all around her the joy of victory seemed to swallow up every other object, her heart felt bitterness inexpressible. She hastened into her tent to conceal her agitation. The danger of Yarmak extinguished in her bosom every sensation of delight.

A few days relieved her from her painful disguise. Obligated, in corre-

spondence with the general exultation, to wear a face of joy over an aching heart, the return of Yarmak, though on a litter, encouraged hope of his speedy recovery. Men, women, and children went out to meet him, and welcomed him home with blessings. The Cossack nation in general regarded him as their deliverer, all acknowledged their late victory to be the sole effect of his prudence and intrepidity. The Hettman himself visited him in his tent on his arrival, and, as the reward of his services, raised him to an eminent rank in his army.

Chorlu could not behold without envy the distinguishing honours paid him. The sting of that scorpion infused her baleful venom into his heart. He felt injured at seeing one so much his inferior in rank, exalted in the public estimation above him. Though
he

he continued pretended professions of friendship, he regarded him henceforward, with the malignant eye of a rival. Such, alas! is the deep inbred corruption of the human heart! can we wonder to see its effects among barbarians, when every day affords the like envious jealousies, and faithless friendships among those who bear the Christian name!

CHAPTER III.

THE ASSIGNATION.

THE first visit of Yarmak, when able to leave his tent, was to the court of Mazeppa, to thank him for the honours that he had conferred upon him. A stronger attraction also led him thither, the hope of seeing

Velika. As he passed the outer inclosure, the faithful conveyor of the billet passed him. "I shall be here," said she, "when you return;" and hastened on.

The hint was too important to be neglected. While he waited for the Hettman in the hall of audience, he drew a leaf from his girdle, and wrote on it,

"Yarmak lives by your command,
 "but without Velika death had been
 "preferable. This state of distance
 "from her is insupportable. How
 "may I kiss her feet, and for once
 "enjoy the transport of avowing
 "myself her faithful slave."

The Hettman, with his nobles, at that instant entered the hall of audience; Velika was at his right hand. A blush glowed on the cheeks of the lovely Cossack, when she met the eyes of Yarmak, and heightened her beauty.

beauty. All congratulated him on his recovery. And Mazeppa received his acknowledgments for the honours done him, with the most flattering declarations how richly he had deserved them.

The audience was not long. Yarmak touched the ground with his forehead and retired. The welcome messenger crossed him, as he passed the gate, received the folded leaf, and disappeared. He hastened to his tent, agitated with the expectation of what might be the result of a request, which, he began to fear, might offend, as too presumptuous.

The shadows of the evening had left just light sufficient to distinguish objects, when he perceived near the door of his tent, the faithful attendant, to whom he had committed his billet. She passed the tent door

hastily, dropping in his view, a leaf folded.

Impatient to know the contents, Yarmak eagerly snatched it from the ground, and unfolding it, by the lamp which burned in his apartment, he read with the greatest emotion,

“ Velika is above disguise. Yarmak’s honour is worthy confidence.
“ At midnight be at the foot of the
“ great oak, which terminates the
“ grove behind our tents.”

Judge of the transport of Yarmak! He read and read again the pleasing command. Never seemed the hours to move so slow. An hundred times he was at the tent door to mark the ascent of the midnight star. He feared, that some unusual power had retarded its course, and that it would never mount to the meridian. He was too impatient to wait, and more than an hour before the time, wrapping

ping himself in his cloak, he hastened to the welcome spot, scarce feeling the ground on which he trod.

The moon was just rising from the distant Caspian sea, and glimmering through the grove, served to render objects indistinctly visible. His eyes were immoveably fixed towards the tents of Velika; and he felt, tormented with a thousand fears, lest some unhappy accident should have detained her, or some mistake have led him wrong. At last he perceived a distant shade gliding through the trees of the grove. He advanced with trembling steps. It was Velika—he fell at her feet—and for a moment joy stopped his utterance.

“Fairest of the daughters of men,” said the transported Cossack, “pardon the presumption of Yarmak, who turns his eyes to the daughter

“ of Mazeppa, ambitious to be regarded as her faithful slave.”

“ Yarmak,” said she, “ I should esteem myself unworthy that fidelity, if I could torment thee with suspense. The step I have taken must assure thee, that the eyes of Velika are just to thy excellencies. Rise from the ground.”

She stretched out her hand, he seized and kissed it with transport, then led her to the foot of the oak, where seated on the grassy mound which surrounded it, the hours fled like moments amidst their protestations of eternal fidelity.

Imagine what would be the language of hearts like theirs. The sentiments of passion are the same in every clime. Polished manners have introduced refinement and delicacy; and fiction with us hath too often learnt to supply the feelings of nature. The barbarian,

barian, if he utters his sensations with greater simplicity, utters them also with the greater charms of truth.

The ungrateful moment approached. Velika must return to her tent. He led her as far as was prudent, so as to avoid discovery. Then kissing her hand and pressing it to his bosom, they parted before the dawn of day. But not till she had informed him, how they might continue their interviews unsuspected, and enjoy the inexpressible delight of exchanging their mutual vows of constant love and inviolable faithfulness.

Velika acquainted him, that she had gained her woman who waited on her; that it being the business of Amama to attend her last at night, and to waken her in the morning, she had engaged her to exchange their apparel—that this attendant now occupied her tent—and as their
stature

stature was nearly equal, and they were veiled, she could pass without suspicion to her own tent in the morning, and Amama return to hers, in her own cloaths.

The meeting of the lovers was thus continued unsuspected; whilst in public a profound distance was cautiously observed. In these interviews Yarmak learnt from Velika the certainty of what he had often of late suspected—that Chorlu, envious at his rising glory, was in affection alienated from him, and no longer the friend he professed himself—that he had in him to apprehend the jealousy of a rival who waited for his halting—and that Mazepa had received most honourable applications from more than one of the neighbouring Tartar princes ambitious of his alliance, and soliciting an union with his daughter.

Yarmak's

Yarmak's alarms at these tidings, (for love is necessarily jealous,) were ever silenced by the tender assurances of Velika. And though no prospect appeared, that their connection would ever receive the approbation of Mazeppa and Chorlu, they would not despair; enjoying the present hour, they waited till time should open the favourable moment. The hopes of lovers can form a basis or a shadow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CATASTROPHE.

THE fame of Mazeppa's victory had reached the court of the Kontaysha, and the distinguished excellencies of his daughter had flown along with it.

The

The Kontaysha is one of the most powerful of those Tartar princes, that inhabit the country south of Siberia. His dominions extend from the kingdom of Astrachan to the borders of the Mongals, tributaries to China, and occupy a vast space of Asia almost unknown to Europeans. His subjects, according to the universal custom of the Tartar tribes, lead a wandering life, and live in tents, which they remove from place to place for the convenience of pasturage, like the ancient patriarchs.

Their wealth is in their cattle. Agriculture unknown—labour their aversion—hunting their amusement and employment—their provision the flesh of their herds and flocks—but the most esteemed is that of their horses; their drink the milk of their mares and buffaloes—which, when sower and fermented, produces an intoxicating

cating beverage—their cloathing consists of the skins of their sheep, with the wool turned inside in winter, and their caps of the same materials—and sometimes the pelt of the elk, roebuck, antelope, the fox, the bear, and other lesser animals are worn as their finery. These serve for their bed, with their garments, spread above and beneath them, on low benches raised around their tents. Strangers in general to the luxuries of commerce, except a few of their nobles, who sometimes receive from China and Persia silks, in barter for the commodities of their country.

The Kontaysha, struck with the report of the beauty of Velika, resolved to send an embassy to Mazeppa, under pretence of congratulating him on his victory; but their chief object was to make observations whether fame had not exaggerated the excellencies

cellencies of the Hettman's daughter; and if not, he determined to demand her in marriage: an alliance of which Mazeppa could not but be ambitious.

The news, which was soon whispered at Court, was as a thunder clap to the intoxicated lovers; and circumstances had arisen, which rendered their situation still more distressing. The stolen waters which had been so sweet began now to be embittered. Indeed it seldom happens that such connections, however we pity the objects, terminate in abiding comfort. Let the fate of Velika, whilst it draws the tear of compassion, awaken the jealousy of every daughter, how unknown to her parents, she presumes to form attachments, even with the most deserving.

In one of those unguarded moments during their secret interviews, when
the

the wakeful guard of prudence slept, and tender endearments had loosened the reins of passion; Velika had consented to become the wife of Yarmak.

Among barbarians, where the forms of marriage are less ceremonious, and the ties of our purer religion being unknown, the restraints of appetite must be more feeble, some excuse may be suggested for their frailty.

The effects of this intercourse soon appeared. Velika was conscious that her situation could not be long concealed, and dreaded the effects of her father's resentment.

The ambassadors had informed the Kontaysha, that fame had reported less than truth of the qualities of the Hettman's daughter. By his order therefore they demanded her in marriage,

riage, and her father appeared transported with the proposal.

Mazeppa, supposing that Velika would receive the news with equal satisfaction, immediately sent for her, to his apartment; and with pleasure sparkling in his eyes, informed her of the honourable offer. But how great was his surprize, to see his daughter turn pale as ashes, and sink down lifeless on the sofa where she was seated.

Her women were summoned, and proper applications soon recovered her to sensibility. She pretended sudden indisposition—said the surprize had overcome her—and wished the matter were not quite so hastily concluded. But her evident confusion could not escape the piercing eye of Mazeppa.

She retired to her apartment, and he, agitated with suspicion, anger, and

and fear, hastened to the tent of Chorlu, and communicated to him the strange reception which Velika had given to a proposal so transcendently honourable for them. Rage flashed from the swarthy visage of Chorlu.

“Some traitor,” said he, “hath seduced the heart of Velika.” And though no circumstances had yet betrayed the fatal secret, the suspicious bosom of the prince instantly turned to the object of his secret envy: convinced that among the Cossack nobles, none were so likely to engage the heart of Velika as Yarmak.

“Mine,” said he, “father be the task to unfold this mystery. Affect neither surprise nor resentment. Let your countenance be to this daughter, unworthy the blood of Mazeppa, as a foretime. I will unperceived, by night and
“day,

“ day, so watch her every motion,
“ that I doubt not ere long the secret
“ shall be detected, and the traitor
“ punished.”

Velika now felt all the peril of their situation, though for herself comparatively indifferent, she trembled, viewing the precipice on which her beloved Yarmak stood. She dared endure all that an offended father, or a malignant brother could inflict on her. But Yarmak's danger overwhelmed her with anguish; she knew the ambition of Mazeppa, and the envy of Chorlu, and that the approaching discovery would draw down upon him their heaviest indignation. No shadow of escape presented itself to her view, and every scheme, either of concealing her own situation, or securing her lover, seemed alike impracticable.

In

In this state of distress, shut up alone in her tent, weighed down with sorrow, too great to find a vent or relief in tears, she called Amama. Yarmak must be acquainted with her perplexities, though dark and dismal the prospect, his wisdom might contrive some expedient. His advice she determined to obey. The night following she appointed him to meet her at the wonted grove. Their past interviews had hitherto been unsuspected. She flattered herself (such is the foolish presumption of the human heart!) the present would be equally secure and unnoticed.

But when envy and ambition are awake, what can escape their jealous eyes? Chorlu had visited his sister under the pretence of her indisposition. His countenance breathed fraternal tenderness, and unsuspecting openness. He mentioned the offer

of

of the Kontaysha with much respect, but insinuated that though the demand appeared highly honourable, it deserved mature deliberation; both politically, least it might afford him, hereafter, a pretence to interfere with the affairs of the Cossacks; and also, because unless she cordially relished the proposal, he by no means wished to see her sacrificed on the altar of ambition.

His words were as balm to the heart of Velika, and served to lull all her suspicions asleep. She saw not the secret poison which lurked within his heart. For a moment the gleam of hope, like the flame, which darts from the expiring taper, kindled in her bosom.

Chorlu had fixed around the tent of Velika his faithful spies, with orders to watch every creature's motions

tions who should go in or out, and bring him exact information.

As the dusk of the evening approached, Amama quitted the apartment of her mistress, whither, as soon as Chorlu took his leave, she had been summoned, and bore from thence in her bosom the order for Yarmak's attendance the night following.

The spy who watched her motions, followed her unperceived to the Cossack's tent, saw the leaf dropped near the door, and eagerly seized by the impatient lover. He communicated the intelligence to his master. And now not a doubt remained.

Chorlu instantly dispatched two of his most trusty attendants:—enjoined them not to lose sight of the Cossack's tent—to follow him with the utmost
caution

caution wherever he should go—and bring him immediate notice.

The unsuspicious Cossack waited as usual with eagerness for the midnight hour. The sky was overcast, and here and there, between the clouds, a star emitted its feeble ray, just sufficient to direct the step of caution. He hastened to the grove; Velika had for once prevented him: her impatience to see him, had urged her thither before the time, and she anxiously waited his arrival.

The fatal discovery soon reached the tent of Chorlu. He seized his sabre—bid two others of his trusty Cossacks attend him—and advancing with the most profound silence and caution through the grove, whose thick foliage, added to the darkness of the night, effectually concealed them from view, they stole unperceived to the very branches of the oak,

oak, at the foot of which the unhappy lovers sat.

Their eager discourse, and deep concern had quite absorbed their attention. Yarmak's arm was round the waist of Velika, her head reclined on his bosom, which was plentifully watered with her tears, whilst she informed him of her father's proposal, and vowed she had rather die the most tormenting death than prove unfaithful to her dear Cossack.

The rage of Chorlu maddened into fury at the sight. He snatched his sabre from his side, and springing on the defenceless Yarmak, "Traitor," he cried, "have I detected thee," and instantly aimed a stroke at him, which threatened to sever the head of the unfortunate Yarmak from his body.

But the darkness which prevented the exact direction of the stroke, and the very fury which dealt it, caused

H

the

the sabre to take a protuberance of the oak, against which he was reclined. He started from his seat, whilst Velika, with a shriek, sunk down motionless to the earth. But ere Yarmak could recover himself, the attendants of Chorlu had seconded their master, whose sabre was soon disengaged from the oak, and Yarmak's left arm received a deep wound, as he lifted it to parry the thrusts of these assassins.

As the contest was so unequal, he fixed his back against the oak, and like a wild boar at bay, he directed his sabre, which he had with difficulty disencumbered from his cloak, against the united attacks of his enemies.

Chorlu, stung with his disappointment, and impatient for the sacrifice, rushed unguarded forward, and met the sabre of Yarmak; it entered
his

his heart, and he fell dead at his feet. The attendants seeing their master fallen, fled to the tents, and alarmed the guard with their cries.

Velika had just recovered from her swoon, insensible of what had passed; but Yarmak's danger was her first agony. "Fly, fly, Yarmak," she cried, "if possible preserve a life so dear to Velika:" and seeing the dead man at her feet, weltering in his blood, she sunk back again into a death-like coma.

The alarm was instantly spread.—The lights began to glimmer through the grove.—The guards of Mazeppa approached.—A moment must decide his fate.

The anguish of the miserable Yarmak can be better conceived than expressed. Chorlu lay dead at his feet—Velika breathless.—The first emotions of despair prompted him to

fall on his sabre, and end a life become so wretched: but some secret fear of self-murder, even in barbarians—an over-ruling, and though unseen, restraining hand—and what had deeply impressed his mind, the last words of Velika—urged him to fly, though he knew not whither.

The night was gloomy.—The Volga not very distant.—The banks and part of the stream covered with high flags, infested with moskitoes: there the unhappy Cossack sought an asylum from his pursuers. He plunged into the river, and having struggled through the reeds and flags till his strength was exhausted, he buoyed himself up with difficulty above the water. His wound began to stiffen, which he had scarce before perceived, and his distressing situation, added to its anguish: but the torment of his mind was more insupportable.

The

The day broke upon him in this agonizing condition; and he heard the noise of his pursuers, who among the other places of covert, the rocks, the mountains, and the woods, forgot not the banks of the river. But he was hid for greater purposes in the designs of Providence.

The more every thinking man observes the course of human events, the more he will be convinced, that there is a God, who governs the earth, and over-rules to his own glory, all the ways of the children of men.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISGUISE.

DURING the broad light of day, Yarmak dared not to adventure from his covert. But as the evening drew on, his tormenting situation compelled him to make an effort for his life, unless he determined to sink beneath the waters of the Volga. He struggled through the flags into the open stream, and spreading his arms to the flood pressed for the opposite bank of the river.

The Cossacks are accustomed from their birth to swimming. In all their excursions they require no bridge to pass the widest rivers, but plunging into the stream, slip from their horses back,

back, and holding the reins with one hand, swim with the other, with surprising rapidity.

Yarmak exhausted with hunger and fatigue, his arm stiff, and his cloaths soaked with wet, reached the shore with the utmost difficulty. The Volga separates the territories of the Cossacks from the kingdom of Astrachan. He hoped that he might be safer there than in the dominions of Mazepa, though he doubted not but bodies of troops would scour the country on both sides in quest of him.

To satisfy the importunate cravings of hunger was his first concern. Perceiving a glimmering light at a distance, he advanced towards it, and found it to be the hut of a fisherman. He earnestly entreated admittance. The humane inhabitant received him courteously; and seeing him dripping

with wet, and exhausted with fatigue, enquired into the cause of his misfortune. Yarmak pretended that as he and some Cossacks his companions, were on a voyage on the Volga, their bark unfortunately overset and sunk, and that he alone, after having been dashed against the rocks and wounded, had with difficulty struggled to the shore.

The fisherman had a wife and two daughters, who assisted him in his labours. They cordially interested themselves for the unhappy sufferer, and seeing him ready to faint, they drew a little jar of spirits from a coffer, and gave him a sup—led him to a bench near the fire where some fish was broiling, which hunger made him devour with eagerness—and then after bathing his arm, which was now considerably swelled, they applied to it a poultice of herbs, and offered him

him the pallet on which they slept; observing kindly that repose must be needful for him.

There oppressed with grief, and wearied down with fatigue, sleep closed the eyes of the disconsolate Yarmak. But his troubled dreams brought back the fearful scenes of the preceding days. The image of Velika motionless at the foot of the oak, and Chorlu's ghastly visage made him start in his slumbers. Whilst the kind fisherman, unsuspecting of the real cause, heard the groans and sighs which he uttered, and pitied him.

When the morning returned, Yarmak felt himself somewhat refreshed, and would have taken his leave of his friendly hosts. But they perceived how unfit he was to travel, and begged him to make their hut for a while his home, until his arm was safe, and his strength recruited. As the place

was very retired, and he hoped he might be there concealed from pursuit, he thankfully accepted their cordial invitations.

By their care and attention his wound soon healed. He determined then no longer to burden the hospitable family, and an event happened which hastened his removal.

The daughters of the fisherman were accustomed weekly to carry their basket of fish to the neighbouring village, and procure in return the necessaries which they wanted. Yarmak willing to be of some use to his benefactors, and anxious to hear whether tidings of the late catastrophe had crossed the river, desired he might ease them of the burden, and attend them thither. He left his own garments at the hut, and borrowing of the fisherman a coat and cap, thrust his

his black locks under it, and trudged onward to the village.

A Russian soldier who stood centry at the entrance, observing him a stranger, demanded whence he came. "I am," says he, (for he spoke the Russian language as a native) "the servant of Backhoff the fisherman." "I would," said the soldier, "thou wert Yarmak the Cossack, for then my fortune were made for ever." His disguise removed suspicion. He wished, but durst not ask the soldier any question, though his heart burned to speak. He passed on, and having delivered up the basket to the daughters of his host, he determined without delay to escape for his life. He perceived the danger imminent, and feared that a discovery could now be hardly avoided.

Yet the care of his life was but a secondary consideration with him. His anxiety

anxiety to know the condition of Velika determined him to hazard every thing to gain that information, though a deep melancholy preyed upon his heart, and dire forebodings of the fatal event tormented him night and day.

He cut his hair short, put a patch over his right eye, and turning his back on the village, struck into the high road for Astrachan, begging his way, as a disbanded foldier of the Czar's army.

The good fisherman expected his return, that and the following day, with impatience. He went himself to the village, but his inquiries were fruitless.

Yarmak had travelled three days alone, and was now but one more distant from Astrachan, when he met the Caravan returning with the merchandize of Persia towards Casan.

He

He threw himself in the evening among the muleteers and camel drivers, and having made a calamitous story of his sufferings in the wars, which excited their compassion, they invited him to share their repast, and spreading a skin for a table cloth, they sat down on the ground around it.

The news of Astrachan was the subject of their discourse. And one of the muleteers asked him, if he had met on the road any Cossack troops, in quest of a fugitive called Yarmak. He pretended entire ignorance, and enquired into the cause. They informed him of all that they had heard at Astrachan, and little thinking how deeply their guest was interested in the narrative, besides the particulars, which he but too well knew, they added,—that Velika was found in a
state

state nearer death than life—that her agony hastened an untimely birth—and that herself and infant were buried in the same grave three days after the unhappy catastrophe—that Mazeppa breathed nothing but the most fearful vengeance against the unfortunate Yarmak, whom before, the whole Cossack nation adored—and that vast rewards had been offered to any man, who should bring him to the Hettman dead or alive.

Yarmak heard, petrified as a statue, with horror; and could grief have broken his manly heart, he must there have met the conclusion of his sufferings and life together.

The greatness of his anguish prevented those violent expressions of it, which must have discovered him. His companions had made free with their leathern bottle, and were more intently

intently fixed on that, than the countenance of their guest. And as he sat at the greatest distance from the lamp, he passed unobserved.

As soon as he had recovered sensation, which for a while was utterly suspended, he silently retired, and threw himself upon the ground in agony unutterable. Despair had now filled up the bitter cup of misery to the brim.

Whither shall the wretched Yarmak turn his footsteps? the world to him was now an howling wilderness, —life itself become a burden almost insupportable—and hope, that beams into the lowest dungeon, was fled from him for ever. What a night was that! extended on his parent earth he lay, wishing ten thousand times she would open her compassionate bosom, and hide him to behold the sun no more.

But

But the days of man are numbered. He must wait till his appointed change shall come, and submit to be the plastic clay in the great Potter's hand.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MULETEER.

TORPID with grief, as one intoxicated, (for such the muleteers supposed him), Yarmak lay in stupid astonishment, and scarce retained any longer the exercise of reason. But when the morning broke, the noise of the preparations for the march roused him from his lethargy; and one of his evening companions seeing him sitting with head hanging over his knees, in the appearance of the profoundest melancholy, cried out,
“ Come,

“ Come, brother foldier, chear up,
“ they that go to the wars must be
“ content with their scars. Let not
“ your noble courage fink under
“ your ill luck; begging is but a
“ poor trade now a-days, and you
“ will mend your lot as a muleteer.
“ I wish you would turn your back
“ on Astrachan, and join our troop,
“ we shall help to dispel your sor-
“ rows. We lost one of our fellows
“ yesterday, and if you will supply
“ his place, I’ll speak to the head
“ driver, who is my friend, and I
“ dare say he will employ you.”

Yarmak endeavoured to sum up all his powers of thought, his desperate situation admitted of no delay in his answer. He saw no object to lead him forward to Astrachan, all places were alike to him: since life would not leave him, he submitted to exist in any country where providence might

might cast him. For even Cossacks believe a providence.

He thanked the muleteer for his friendly offer, and passively yielding himself to his persuasion, awaited the result of his application. He quickly returned, while Yarmak yet sat motionless, his eyes fixed on the ground.

“Come brother,” said the driver,
“up from your melancholy medita-
“tions, and buckle yourself to your
“business. Your pay and fare will
“be like mine, and you may either
“go on from Casan to Moscow with
“the Caravan, or return with the
“next to Astrachan.”

Yarmak arose and endeavouring to conceal the tumult of his spirits, followed his kind friend to the baggage. His strength and adroitness procured him liberal commendations from his companions, and they assured

ed him that one journey would make him an adept in his new profession.

The noise, the company, the constant attention necessary to his charge; the daily labour of attending, feeding, dressing, loading, and unloading the mules and camels; these, though they could in no measure remove, yet they served to stupify something of the sense of misery, by preventing his brooding over it, and compelling him to advert to other objects. Such is the nature of the human mind—it must have employment. Under afflictions solitude nourishes melancholy. Whilst however irksome at such seasons business may appear, it is the surest means of softening the anguish by dividing the attention from the cause of our distress.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

THE RENCONTRE.

NEAR six weeks had passed without any material occurrence. The Caraven was advanced within two days march of the Kama, which falls into the Volga, one days journey below Casan.

Yarmak went forward in the bitterness of his soul, not inattentive to his employment, but utterly insensible to the charms of that fine country, which, though almost utterly uncultivated and destitute of inhabitants, compared with many other kingdoms of Europe, may be called a paradise.

Some future generations perhaps shall till those plains, where elks and
antelopes

antelopes now graze undisturbed; and that mighty empire of Russia, which seems fast emerging from barbarism, teem, like China, with population, and emulate her industry.

The evening approached, the sun had not yet descended beneath the hills, but his orbit began to appear more enlarged; the eye of the beholder could now endure its before insufferable blaze: the order was given to halt and pitch the tents.

All was confusion, unloading, storing, collecting wood, preparing provisions, guard dispersed, no danger apprehended. When suddenly from the skirts of a wood, that extended from the mountains on the right to the plain where their tents were erected, a troop of banditti, consisting of about twenty men, completely armed, and nobly mounted, rushed upon that defenceless multitude.

The

The cries of the affrighted spread dismay and confusion—the guard surprised, were the first to secure themselves from danger—the merchants attempted no resistance—and the muleteers, though numerous, had only sabres. At the first fire of the banditti, all was panic and flight.

Yarmak alone felt no fear—his native martial spirit roused by danger—he drew his sabre, and boldly flung himself into the front of the baggage. The robbers expecting no resistance, pushed forward; but the sabre of Yarmak for a while stopped their career: he pierced the first horse that advanced to the heart, which rearing, fell backwards on his rider. The next, eager to revenge his companion, lifted his sabre to cut down the Cossack; he parried it as it fell with his own, receiving the robber's hand on its edge, which divid-
ing

ing the tendons of his wrist, his sabre flew to the ground. The second in command, enraged at such unexpected resistance from one man, drew his pistol from his holsters, and discharged its contents through the body of the unfortunate Cossack. The ball entered his right breast, and passing through his lungs, came out below his shoulder blade. He fell before the horse's feet. A second pistol drawn from its case was cocked to dispatch him quite, when the Captain of the troop seeing all the rest fled, touched with generosity (for even robbers have their virtues) arrested the arm of his Lieutenant, and bid him spare a brave man, who deserved to live.

They immediately dismounted—perceived that Yarmak breathed—observed that the wound was attended with no great effusion of blood—
they

they laid him on a litter, which they found in the Caravan, with their own disabled companions; and whilst the rest plundered the treasure and merchandise, two of the troop were ordered to escort them to their retreat through those gloomy and almost impenetrable woods, which divide the kingdom of Casan from Siberia.

THE

CHAPTER I.

RUSSIA hath ever been pestered
with banditti, some of whom
have rendered themselves formidable,
and required regular forces to quell
them. As one band hath been sup-
pressed, another hath, as it were,
sprung from its ashes, and perpetuat-
ed the mischief. The deserts are
vast—the natural fastnesses of the
country difficult to penetrate—the
woods immense and pathless—and
I substance

I

substance

subsistence on game, and the multitude of fish in every river without difficulty.

Those who had the care of the invalids, no sooner reached the covert of the woods, safe from pursuit, should any be made, than they halted. And one of them, whose skill in surgery, for a Russian, was not despicable, having learnt experience in the wars, where he had acted as assistant at the hospital, began to examine the wounds. Yarmak's, as most imminently dangerous, engaged his first attention.

Though the ball had passed through the lungs, happily it had laid open no large blood-vessel; and his bosom happening to be open and bare, it had carried no extraneous matter along with it, passing clean through, just beneath the scapula. Having therefore lightly applied dossils, dipped

ped in tincture of myrrh, to the orifices, he hoped nature, the great restorer, would cast off the sloughs, and fill up the vacuity, if no violent inflammation came on, to prevent which he gave him a copious bleeding, and replaced him gently on the litter.

The hand of his wounded companion had bled profusely; but a handkerchief, wrapped tight round it, having received the blood, which was now coagulated, he would not unbind it, least he should bring on a fresh hemorrhage; but laying his hand in the position suited to bring the lips of the wound nearest together, he hung it in a sling round his neck, to prevent all tension of the muscles.

The other on examination, having no bones broken or dislocated, though severely bruised, he bled, and applying some spirituous embrocations,

assured him, he would mount him again soon for future expeditions.

Meantime the victorious troop with their booty had hastened to their retreat. They had brought off with them what they found most valuable in the caravan, with two or three of the choicest horses; and as the hospital escort travelled slowly, they could only the day after join their companions.

Yarmak to whom all places were equally indifferent, the den of robbers, or the walls of Casan, swallowed up with deeper sufferings than those of his wounds, lay long doubtful of recovery. His inward distress contributed greatly to retard the cure; but the vigour of his constitution, joined to the friendly care of his conquerors, who honoured his courage and treated him with the
greatest

greatest humanity, triumphed over all. The discharge abated, the wound filled up, and his strength daily returned.

During his convalescence, the Captain of the troop spared no persuasions to engage him to join in their enterprises: but in vain. Those sentiments of honour, which Yarmak had early cherished, could not be vanquished by sophistical reasonings, nor, though a Cossack, a barbarian, would his conscience bend to his convenience. But whilst he endeavoured to evade their solicitations, his replies avoided every reflection on his kind benefactors.

They pressed him also repeatedly to give them a real account of himself. His manners bespoke him far superior to the station in which they found him. And his courage and address in managing his sabre, demon-

strated that he had been no stranger to its use. Besides his knowledge and conversation manifested, that his education could not have been with muleteers. A deep gloom hung over him, which all their kindness was ineffectual to dispel. Nor could it arise from his present situation, where every thing conspired to make him infinitely more comfortable, than as a muleteer in the refuse suit of a caravan. But all their questions drew from him no satisfactory account, and served but to increase their curiosity.

One day returning from a successful expedition, the banditti found, on opening a parcel which they had brought off with them, some proclamations of the Czar, enjoining all his subjects, at the request of the Hettman of the Cossacks, to apprehend one Yarmak, who was said to have

have fled from justice, into the Russian dominions, with a particular description of his person, and the promise of a considerable reward, to any man who should discover and seize the criminal.

“And who, I wonder,” said the Captain, “is this Yarmak?” “One of the bravest of mankind, and the most generous,” said a Kalmuck, who was one of the troop. “I am a living monument of it. I was in the Kalmuck army, which entered the Cossack territories about two years ago. All had fallen before us. We were within a march of their principal seat, and flattered ourselves, that we should next day share their spoils. But when we counted on nothing but certain victory, the gallant Yarmak, with a thousand men, by a most skilful and rapid march, with irresistible
I 4 “bravery

“bravery fell on our rear, carried
“confusion through our camp—and
“seconded by troops in front, who
“waited the signal of his attack, en-
“tirely penetrated, broke, and rout-
“ed us. I was among the wounded
“and fell. Our general, with more
“than ten thousand men, was taken
“prisoner. The noble Cossack, though
“himself wounded, restrained the
“fury of the pursuers, prevented the
“carnage our ravages had provoked;
“and after ordering the same care to
“be taken of our wounded, as his
“own, importuned and prevailed
“with the Hettman to dismiss the
“captives without ransom. When
“recovered from his wounds, he at-
“tended us himself to the banks of
“the Volga, where boats had been
“provided to transport us to our own
“hord: and seeing every man safely
“embarked, Go, said he Kalmucks,
“to

“to your own countrymen, and learn
“of Cossacks, to be just and gene-
“rous.”

The tear started from the eye of the fierce Kalmuck, as he ended the relation, and not a robber, but expressed in his countenance, the sympathetic thrill of his bosom.

“I would,” said the Captain, “the
“gallant youth fled hither for shel-
“ter, not all the powers of the Czar
“of Moscovy should endanger his
“safety.”

Imagine, then, the mixture of astonishment, doubt, delight and wonder, which marked the countenances of the banditti, when rising from his seat, and laying his hand on his breast,

“Captain,” said he, “I AM YARMAK.
“Since cruelty and injustice arm the
“empire against me, I claim your
I 5 “protection,

“protection, and enlist myself under
“your banner.”

The history, which they had so often wished to extort from him, he now related without disguise, interrupted in the narration by some short paroxysms, when the bitter recollection of past scenes for a while stopped his utterance.

Every ear and eye hung on him in silent attention, and even the hard hearts of men steeled with slaughter, still felt, at the relation, some melting drops of the milk of human tenderness.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER II.

THE BANDITTI.

THE banditti counted themselves happy in the acquisition of such a companion as Yarmak, and treated him with a flattering distinction. They desired him to choose out of their armoury, his carbine and pistols ; and from their stables, where they had always horses in abundance, mounted him nobly. Every excursion tended to raise in them a higher opinion of his courage and conduct, and his humanity and generosity in that savage employment excited their respect.

In a valley deep embosomed between the mountains, which divided the territories of Casan, from the
then

then undiscovered regions of Siberia, the banditti had fixed the seat of their empire. The winding passes between the rocks and mountains were only pervious to themselves, and thick woods, of more than a days journey, which they alone knew how to penetrate, covered the approach. A considerable stream, clear as the drops which fall from the clouds, prepared by nature's alembic, ran waving through the vale, which afforded plentiful pasturage; and fish every where excellent in that country, the sterlet and sturgeon abounded.

The mountains on the north side were covered with woods, in some places reaching down to the rivers brink, and here and there dark rocks, abrupt, projected over it. To the south, the valley opened; the ground was interspersed with gentle risings, and groves planted by the hand of nature.

nature. The scene terminated in distant mountains, whose tops were often hid in the clouds.

Near the middle of the valley, a rising hillock, projected from the northern mountains, descending with a gentle declivity to the river. It seemed as if scooped from the vast ridge behind it, where the mountain side bent into an amphitheatre, and rose for two or three versts less precipitous. Nature had stamped such beauty on the spot, that choice was instantly determined. It was originally covered with wood, which fire and the ax soon levelled, enriching the ground with their ashes, and preparing their garden for the production of all the pulse, natural to that country, with luxuriance.

Here the banditti had fixed their tents, and revelled, undiscovered for several years. They made their excursions

ursions frequently very distant, and were sometimes a month absent from their home. Abundance of the silks of Persia, and the furs of Moscovy, filled their treasury, with heaps of useless wealth, coveted even when an incumbrance. Nor was any conveniency of life wanting. The plundered caravans abundantly supplied them.

Their number had increased from four to six and thirty. And the regulations established (for even among robbers the blessings and necessity of government are felt) were observed without distinction. They had elected a captain to conduct their enterprises, and lead them to plunder, but the power was in the body at large as a republic.

Their laws were few, but strictly obeyed.

No

No women were to be admitted among them, as that must prove a sure source of contention.

They excluded servants, to prevent the burden of too numerous a body, and to avoid all mortifying distinctions.

Each in rotation abode at home, to provide for those who were absent, and take care of their tents and their cattle.

They admitted no superiority. But every measure relative to the community was decided by the vote of the majority: and once determined, all, without remonstrance or reluctance, were to aid in carrying it into execution.

Their stock was common. And as there was more than enough for all, each took from it whatever he needed for his immediate use. But no man was allowed to collect in his
tent

tent any property, or store, separate from the community.

No man was permitted to be absent from home but by general orders.

When once embarked in enterprise, and sallied forth under their commander, he became absolute, and his injunctions were to be obeyed without murmur or delay.

All dined and supped at the same table, and waited on their companions alternately.

When not employed in any expedition, every one amused himself as he pleased, with fishing, hunting, or the culture of their garden.

In such an abode, and under these regulations, notwithstanding the fears of discovery, inseparable from their condition, they esteemed their lot comparatively happy.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

THE DISASTER.

THE continued and atrocious depredations committed by these banditti—the clamours of the merchants—and the great interruption of the caravans, obliged the government to exert the most vigilant and vigorous efforts to discover their retreat, and destroy the robbers. For this purpose, when the next caravan was setting forth for Astrachan, the Governor of Casan had ordered that no more than the usual escort should appear to attend them; but mixed with the muleteers and camel-drivers, and habited like them, a chosen body of dragoons were appointed, that the robbers might be emboldened to advance

as

as usual, as to an easy prey, and hemmed in by numbers, be cut off to a man.

The scouts of the banditti, sent out to gain intelligence, had returned with the tidings that the caravan from Casan was moving forward; and though numerous, they confidently supposed, not above their match. Success had made them presumptuous, and in idea they had already returned triumphant with their spoil.

Yarmak was of the party, and by general voice second in command. He had lost nothing of his sensibility. The remembrance of Velika was dear to him as ever. The oaks of the mountain often heard her name repeated with anguish; and his greatest pleasure (if such it can be called) was to retire alone under the shadow of a rock, which hung over the river, and stretched on the mossy ground,

to ruminate over the melancholy recollection of the hours, which had been spent in the grove of Mazeppa.

Sometimes he upbraided himself as the cause of all her sufferings—sometimes he would execrate the perfidiousness of Chorlu—and wonder at the hard heart of parents. Despair always closed the circle of his reflections. He felt, that to Yarmak, all was lost. And though at his return to the tents, he strove to render himself agreeable to his companions, who delighted in him, yet a settled melancholy preyed on his heart, and in the midst of their joys he would be often absent, till roused from his reverie by their kind attentions.

The active scenes, to which he was now called, proved rather a relief to him, as necessarily engaging a part of his attention. And experience had convinced his comrades, that

that his valour was only equalled by his prudence.

They left at home but four of their number, and making a great detour round the mountains to the south, approached the road, which leads to Astrachan, about six days journey from Casan.

From an eminence covered with thick wood, soon after sun-rising, they discovered to the north, the caravan descending into a spacious plain, at the end of which the banditti had laid their ambuscade; the wood which covered them reaching to within a verst of the high road, by which the caravan must pass.

About three versts to the left was a defile, occasioned by a morass that ran almost to the foot of a mountain. Yarmak perceived the advantage of that situation, and suggested, that by attacking them in the defile, encumbered

bered with baggage, they should take them at the greatest advantage, and almost preclude the possibility of resistance: but the Captain, with his troop, had hitherto met with so little opposition, that they entertained not a doubt of making as easy a conquest of this caravan, as of the preceding; thinking nothing farther necessary than to lie concealed where they were, and rush on them from the skirts of the wood. However, to be more fully assured of the strength and number of their enemies, the Captain took Yarmak with him to a nearer eminence, where undiscovered they would make their observations.

The guard appeared no more than five dragoons in front, a file of three on each side, and five more following the rear. The rest seemed merchants, mounted on their horses, and the canaille of servants and muleteers, their

their attendants; the banditti would have attacked double that number without fear.

Confirmed in their confidence of success, as the caravan, after halting an hour on the plain, moved forward, about three o'clock, the van had passed the road opposite the wood where the banditti lay. At the word of command, the impetuous troop darted, like lightning on the travellers.

The dragoons instantly gave way, screams, terror, and tumult followed, and flight on every side. The robbers penetrated with ease into the thickest of the baggage, and counted their booty won. When suddenly from the rear, the station of the muleteers, a well directed fire of fifty carbines arrested their progress, and brought the Captain and four of his companions dead to the ground, whilst

whilst the dragoons who seemed to fly, joined by a larger body of horse, had wheeled from the front and rear, and hemmed them in, without the prospect of escape; a second volley followed, and four men and three horses fell mortally wounded. Despair seized the remainder, they knew neither how to fight nor fly.

Yarmak alone possessed himself. He saw the moment of hope. "Follow me," cried he, "my brave companions." And putting spurs to his horse, drove furiously into the midst of the dragoons, that hemmed them in. His comrades followed his voice and erected sabre, and the blood of men and horses died the plain.

The only object now was escape. The unexpected shock had broken the dragoons, and every robber shifted for himself as fast as his horses feet would carry him from danger.

Fourteen

Fourteen of the banditti with their Captain remained dead, or mortally wounded on the plain. Of those who escaped, scarce one returned unhurt, some dangerously wounded. Yarmak, among the rest, had received a cut by a sabre on his shoulder, which for a while rendered his left arm nearly useless : but where life is in jeopardy, what astonishing efforts will not men make to extricate themselves from the jaws of death !

They were fiercely pursued to the skirts of the wood. The dragoons rallied, and entered with them. But their unacquaintedness with the secret paths, and the knowledge of the robbers, soon secured them from farther danger, and by midnight they had collected their scattered remains at the rendezvous, where they had left their provisions the preceding day.

Afflicted beyond measure, yet counting themselves fortunate in their escape,

escape, the first care was to examine their wounds. The surgeon happily had not fallen, but escaped with a slight contusion; he hastily dressed, and bound up their wounds in the best manner that time permitted; and having taken some refreshment for themselves and horses, it was the general opinion to march without delay. They feared the pursuit might be continued, nor felt themselves safe, till more distant from the field of battle, and lodged in their desired retreat.

Four days were required to pass the woods and defiles of the mountains, during which they scarce slept or eat but on their horses; and three of their companions too disabled to keep pace with them, were left in the woods, with assurances that assistance should be sent to them. The fifth morning opened to their view the

CHAPTER K welcome

welcome valley. It was at present to them as the gates of Paradise; for they were now more like spectres than men exhausted with fatigue, watching and hunger, besides the anguish; of their wounds.

They found their more fortunate companions at home, eagerly expecting their return, and deeply affected with the common loss, when they heard the event of the expedition, two of them were instantly dispatched, to bring in, if yet alive, their fainted comrades, who were left in the woods, whilst the others attended the weary, the hungry, and the wounded.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESTORATION.

A Plentiful repast, and a refreshing sleep, somewhat revived their drooping spirits; and the next day their companions, who were left in the woods, being brought in, the troop once more assembled. But how different from their former joyous meeting! Dejected, broken, silent each looked on his fellow and wept.

Yarmak, the same, serene, intrepid, recollected, his arm supported in a sling arose:

“ The past, my friends,” said he,
“ is irremediable—but the brave
“ never despair. The loss we have
“ sustained, none feels with greater
“ sensibility than Yarmak; let it a-
K 2 “ waken

“ waken in every bosom the greater
“ ardor to repair it.”

His words were as the honey on the rod of Jonathan, which brought again his departing spirit. A renewed animation glowed on every countenance, each felt and owned the justness of his exhortation.

Had Yarmak's advice been followed, all agreed, the disaster might probably have been prevented: to his resolution, every man confessed, they were indebted for their almost miraculous escape. Who then, so able to retrieve the late disaster, and restore the troop to their former vigour. With unanimous voice they pressed him to accept the command, solemnly engaging to follow his counsels, and in whatever danger, never till death, to forsake him.

“ The post of honour,” said he,
“ my brave companions, ought just-
“ ly

“ ly with us to be the post of danger:
“ far be it from me to decline the
“ service, if such be your pleasure.
“ In one thing only I request your
“ concurrence. Let us never wound
“ the unresisting, nor plunder the
“ poor. Though necessity compels
“ us to live by the sword, let the
“ rich alone supply our wants, and
“ only those, who thirst for our
“ blood, feel the keenness of our
“ sabres.”

All approved, applauded the generous proposal, and bound themselves by oath, scrupulously to fulfill his injunctions.

Yarmak, as the head of the republic, had less time to indulge in solitude his irremediable sorrows.— He had tasted a secret pleasure in courting anguish, and cherishing the ideas which tormented him. But his first attention now was to see his

K 3.

troop,

troop, that remained, perfectly recovered. They were reduced to twenty-one.—To recruit their number, though necessary for great undertakings, was difficult and dangerous; he resolved therefore to employ his present force cautiously, and improve the opportunities, which might offer to encrease it.

CHAPTER V.

THE BOYARD.

THE banditti were no sooner recovered from their wounds and late dismay, than they again panted for action; and Yarmak led them to the field. During their interval of rest, he had not been inactive, but dispatched two of his most adroit companions

companions in the disguise of peasants to the neighbourhood of Casan, where the villages are rich and populous, with directions to inform themselves, whether some wealthy Boyard could not be surpris'd and plundered without danger. They were return'd with the information he desired, and the report which they brought, hasten'd the robbers to their prey.

Yarmak learnt from his spies, that near the banks of the Kama, on a rising ground, stood the castle of Kertzoff, a Boyard, whose covetousness and cruelty rendered him the terror and execration of his peasants. In Russia they are appendages to the estate, and often treated worse than the beasts which they drive. By his exactions of labour from his boors in summer, his own granaries were fill'd, whilst they had scarce time allow-

ed them to raise for themselves a scanty subsistence. And, in winter, they were frozen in the snow, to procure him furs, with which they were never warmed; whilst their least fault was punished with the knout, which he often took the pleasure of inflicting himself with the greatest severity. He was reported to have thus hoarded up great wealth, and though he had no child, having never married, to avoid the expences of a family, his covetousness, as is often seen, increased with his age, and his abundance.

Yarmak, with ten chosen men, advanced to the banks of the Kama, opposite the castle; and dispatching his former spies, each with an attendant, habited as factors, who were buying up grain for the Czar's army, he bid them inform him before night, if they could secure a reception in
the

the castle, when he, with his companions, at an appointed signal given, would be ready to rush in and second their operations.

The pretended merchants enquiring at the village where a quantity of grain might be purchased, naturally drew from the peasants a direction to the castle; and being conducted thither, as they took care to display their purses, filled with ducats, they were no unwelcome visitors to Kertzoff.

He had at that time two years stock of corn in his granaries, and though the unfavourableness of the last harvest had raised the price so high, that many of the poor were famishing with hunger, yet not a grain would the Boyard part with, without the ruble down.

It was past noon before they visited the castle. The purchase, price, and

K 5

quantity

quantity of the grain took some time in debating. The evening was advancing when the bargain was concluded. Being at some distance from the village, and the accommodations then but inconvenient, the exorbitant price which Kertzoff had exacted from them, rendered him more complaisant than usual. Though he had not the generosity to invite them, he was ashamed to reject an intimation, that they wished they might for that night, have accommodations in the castle. He said, he seldom received visitors, but as they were men of worth, he would endeavour to entertain them hospitably. Their horses were ordered to be taken care of, and whilst the Boyard went to issue his orders for supper, the messenger was dispatched to inform Yarmak that the silver whistle should be the signal

signal of his approach, and he would find a conductor at the gate.

The evening passed, in various discourse—the bell rang—the supper was served—the guests were seated—the Boyard called for brandy.—In haste to serve, an awkward servant dropped the cup, before Kertsoff had grasped it in his hand.—“Wretch,” said he, “with eyes
“flashing fire, thou deservest a severer chastisement;—but this once
“I will be thy corrector:—bind
“him.” The pale, and trembling servants, without delay, seized their fellow. He was bound and stripped,—the knout prepared.

In vain the merchants intreated—the Boyard was inexorable. “I
“must teach,” says he, “these
“slaves attention.”

In that moment of confusion, one of the banditti gave the signal to his attendant,

attendant, who slipped to the gate, and putting the whistle to his lips,—Yarmak and his companions rushed into the hall, at the moment when the obdurate Kertzoff was lifting his arm, in vengeance to inflict this cruel punishment. They seized instantly the affrighted Boyard—placed guards at the doors that none might escape—bound all the servants—and after extorting from the wretched Kertzoff a discovery of his treasures, they plundered him of all they could carry with them, and then sat down jovially to finish the entertainment on the table, which the above accident had interrupted; whilst the trembling master of the feast lay bound, as in the agonies of death.

When they had finished their repass, “Boyard,” said Yarmak, “though we are robbers by profession, we are not dead to all sentiments

"ments of justice, as you shall see."

"Boor," (said he, loosing him to the poor culprit who had been bound)

"I am here Czar of Moscow, take

"the knout that lies by thy master's

"side, and lay on him with the same

"severity, that he was about to lay

"it on thee."

They stripped the Boyard, and making two of his own servants hold him down, with drawn sabres over them, the offending youth, though with terror in his looks, laid on, as commanded, with all his might, till the old crippled Kertzoff roared out in agonies.

"Enough," said Yarmak. "Now

"you have felt the knout, Boyard,

"be careful in future how you in-

"flict it. For be assured if I hear

"farther complaints of your cruelty,

"I shall pay you a second visit."

Then

Then leaving all safely bound to prevent pursuit, they took their leave of the Boyard—mounted their horses—and crossed the Kama, returning, delighted with their expedition, and recruited not only with a fresh supply of all their wants, but with an addition to their number.

The servants who had held the Boyard, and the boor who had inflicted the knout, entreated they might be permitted to accompany them, as they could expect nothing but death, if left at the castle, from their master's fury. Yarmak granted their request, and mounting them on the best horses, which Kertzoff's stable afforded, loaded them with plunder. Nor were there any of the troop who afterwards followed him with more inviolable fidelity.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOLDIER AND COMMISSARY.

THE next excursion of the banditti was across the Volga on the road which leads to Moscow.

They were dressed as officers travelling with their attendants to the capital; and had not proceeded far ere they met a poor soldier, with his knapsack at his back, with half an arm, and supported on a wooden leg, trudging with difficulty through a dusty road.

“Whither bound comrade?” said Yarmak.

“To Petroskow, an’ please your honour,” replied the Russian.

“You seem to have suffered in the wars,” said the Captain.

“Ay

“ Ay masters,” said he, “ would
“ the loss of my leg and arm were
“ all my sufferings.”

“ Can we relieve them, brave fellow?” replied the Cossack.

“ God bless your honour,” said he,
“ you are too good for this world,
“ thus to condescend to speak to a poor
“ disbanded soldier. My story is not
“ long but true. I am of Petroskow,
“ where I left an aged father, if he yet
“ lives, who subsisted by my labours;
“ but the Czar, God bless his Majesty,
“ wanted recruits, and I was
“ dragged into the service, and beat
“ into the form and figure of a soldier.
“ At the siege of Precop, I
“ was ordered with a party to storm
“ a bastion. And there a cannon
“ loaded with grape shot broke my
“ arm, and took off my poor leg.
“ Had it taken off my head I had
“ thanked it. Being now no longer
“ fit

“ fit for use, I was disbanded, to
“ travel a thousand miles with a
“ wooden leg, and beg a precarious
“ subsistence with no prospect before
“ me, but of dragging out a life of
“ indigence and misery. And per-
“ haps my poor father, destitute of
“ the bread I used to earn him, is
“ gone down ere this, with want,
“ sorrow and grey hairs to the grave.”

A tear started from his eye, he paused
and proceeded, “ But what adds bit-
“ terness to poverty, is the indignity
“ and cruelty which the wretched
“ meet. I passed just now the coach
“ of our Commissary, who from no
“ higher original than my own is
“ risen to greatness, and out of the
“ bodies of us poor soldiers hath
“ raised a princely fortune. That
“ yonder fine house is his, and all
“ the country, as far as you can see,
“ he has purchased. His bread might
“ have

“ have served for bullets in the siege,
“ and was as difficult for soldier’s
“ teeth to penetrate : indeed more
“ of them died with disease through
“ the badness of our provision, than
“ by the cannon of the enemy. I
“ hoped his honour would remember
“ a poor invalid, and begged hard at
“ the coach door : but he called me
“ impostor, and vagabond, and bid
“ one of his scoundrel servants kick
“ me out of the court ; which office
“ he insolently executed. My blood
“ boiled, but one leg and one arm
“ could make no resistance.”

Indignation and pity filled the heart of Yarmak. “ There comrade,” said he, pulling out his purse full of gold ducats, and throwing it into the soldier’s cap, “ though it burden thy pocket, it will lighten thy heart, return to thy aged father, “ if

“ if he be yet alive, and share with
 “ him thy good fortune.”

The astonished soldier could scarce believe his eyes, and looking up with a countenance marked with strong emotions of gratitude and joy, “ God
 “ blefs your noble heart,” he cried,
 “ may you long live to enjoy the
 “ exalted pleasure of doing good.”

Yarmak and the troop moved forward, whilst the honest soldier turning again and again, to look after his generous benefactor, lifted his wooden leg with greater agility, and pursued his way to Petroskow.

“ My lads,” said Yarmak, “ this
 “ Commissary shall regorge some of
 “ the blood of these poor soldiers
 “ that he is swoln with. We must
 “ beat up his quarters.”

It was drawing towards the evening, when they rode up near the house, and having placed themselves
 so

so as to be observed, they beckoned one of the servants, who stood at the door; enquired to whom that elegant villa belonged—and whether the next village would afford gentlemen comfortable accommodations.

The Commissary who was within hearing, and not a little proud of displaying his newly acquired greatness and nobility, observing them habited as officers of distinction, politely advanced towards them, and invited them to spend the night with him, suggesting, that their accommodations at his house, would probably be more agreeable than any the neighbouring village could afford.

You may be sure Yarmak and his companions needed no great intreaty. After the proper civilities,—of fear they might be troublesome—that their party was large—they suffered themselves

selves to be prevailed upon, and leaving their horses with their servants, they entered a spacious hall, from each side of which opened noble apartments.

Yarmak commended the beauty of the place, and admired the taste of the master. The Commissary, whose vanity was great as his extortions, happy to have an occasion to display his finery, and highly pleased with his guests, who pretended they came from the garrison of Casan, led them through his house and gardens, and leaving them on the terrace for a few minutes, admiring a most beautiful prospect, heightened by the setting sun, whilst he stepped into the house to give some orders, the plan was instantly laid to carry off the Commissary, and share his plunder.

The order for lights to retire after supper was fixed as the signal to begin
the

the attack. Their attendants below were instantly to secure the doors, and bind the servants: whilst the officers above seized the Commissary, and would be ready to aid if needful.

The evening passed in general conversation, during which the Commissary took occasion to insinuate, how necessary a person he had been to his Majesty, that the honours, which he had conferred upon him, were but the reward of his merits—and that the government was still considerably in his debt.

At ten the supper was served. Profusion covered the table. The finest wines Champaign, Tokay, Burgundy flowed in golden goblets round, and the side board was loaded with plate. The Commissary quite elevated with the compliments paid him, like a true Russian, spared not the bottle, so that by midnight the candles

dles danced before him, and his head rolled from shoulder to shoulder. The clock struck twelve—the lights were called for—and the attack began.

Where all was prepared on the one side, and no suspicion on the other, the conquest met no difficulty. The Commissary himself was too far gone to be sensible of any thing that was passing, and the servants drunk or asleep. They were bound all securely. The side board, the jewels, the money, and whatever of value was portable, they quickly packed up, and began their retreat within an hour of midnight.

Yet not so did Yarmak intend the Commissary should escape. He ordered him to be mounted on one of his own horses, bound and gagged. Then hastened their march: by dawn of day they had gained the woods, which

which shade the banks of the Volga. There they baited at a well known haunt: and the affrighted Commissary, by this time restored to the exercise of his reason, being ungagged and unbound most piteously entreated that they would spare his life.

“Thy life friend,” said Yarmak, “would be no compensation for those who have fallen by thy iniquity. The restitution in thy power may yet procure thy liberty. This moment sit down and draw on the secretary of war for ten thousand rubles, out of the arrears due to thee from government, to be distributed by General Menzikoff among the widows and orphans of those brave men, who fell by sickness or the sword before the lines of Precop.”

The command admitted of no hesitation. The trembling Commissary drew

drew the bill. And Yarmak dispatching one of his attendants to the nearest post, bid him hasten to the next rendezvous beyond the Volga; which they crossed, assuring the Commissary that he had nothing farther to apprehend, but that by the time the money was paid he should be at liberty.

After ten days confinement, blindfolded, that he might be capable of no discovery, they conducted him into the high road, and furnishing him with money to carry him home, "Friend," said Yarmak, dismissing him, "dispense of thy remaining wealth to the disabled soldier, the widow, and the orphan, and then thou wilt not tempt the robbers to visit thee."

CHAPTER VII.

THE MONKS.

A VARIETY of depredations succeeded during the course of the ensuing year. In all which they observed their engagements inviolably. None experienced wanton cruelty, nor had the poor ever reason to complain. After having by various means encreased the number of their troop to forty, their last expedition was to the monastery of Troitza.

Troitza is situated on an elevation near the banks of the Votka, a large river which rising in the north, runs southward, and meeting the Kama some versts below Casan, they pour together their streams into the mighty Volga. The monastery is built of
stone

stone with battlements round it, and affords a noble mansion for one hundred monks and their attendants.

As priestcraft is the same in all countries, and greater abuses nowhere prevail, than when the purest religion is perverted by the baseness of men to serve the purposes of pride, ambition, indolence and sensuality, a monastery is not more the seat of superstition, than of intrigue, envy and corruption of manners. The exalted perfection of the monastic life, though revered by the vulgar, being a state so diametrically opposite to the law of nature, as well as the precepts of revelation, it is impossible but the effects of it should be such, as they have been discovered to be, in every nation where this impious abuse of the sacred name of religion prevails.

The monks of Troitza, with all the corruption common to human na-

ture, added the profoundest ignorance, to the peculiar vices of a Russian. And though many of them were scarce able to read their ritual, they prided themselves highly on their profession and sanctity.

The revenues of their monastery were very great. The whole country around them their property. And though bound by the strictest vows of poverty and continence, their house was the seat of plenty, their cellars stored with the choicest wines and liquors, and the ignorant daughters and wives of the peasants an easy prey to their seductions, especially as the power of the confessor was so readily exerted, to grant the absolution that could cancel the crime.

Their treasury was known to be immensely rich, and their wealth continually accumulating. To ease them of the useless load could scarce be
termed

termed an injury, and if returned into circulation would be a real benefit to mankind. The prize was great, but the undertaking dangerous, considering the numbers, as well as craft of those, they had to deal with. Yarmak however resolved on the attempt, and his companions heartily concurred in the enterprize.

A monastery is sure to be the paradise of beggars. Around it, this ragged regiment of the idle and indigent swarms in every country, to receive the daily distribution of bread, broth, victuals, or clothes, which are dealt out at the gate under the profaned name of charity. Assuming therefore the rags of this fraternity, and concealing their pistols in a belt under them, by different roads the banditti assembled, with others, at the gate of the convent.

The time chosen by Yarmak for the execution of the enterprize was the Russian *Maslanitz*, which answers exactly to the season of Carnival in the countries of Romanism. The name signifies, *the butter week*, because after the fast of lent is begun, they are forbidden the use of butter as animal food, and obliged to employ oil in its stead.

The *Maslanitz* continues during the eight days preceding the great fast of lent. To prepare for which holy season of mortification and penance, they make vast provision of cakes and pasties with butter and eggs, and all the rarest viands, which they can procure, with the best and strongest liquors. The day is spent in riot, and the night in debauch. The mask which they wear covers all shame, though a Russian scarce counts the intemperance of that jovial season among

among his crimes. The cloister is not free from the common infection, and at Troitza, where all around them were their boors or tenants, open house was kept for all comers, and eight days indulgence for profligacy within these holy walls set apart for the exercises of peculiar austerity.

As the kitchen was liberally supplied, and copious cans of beer and brandy flowed from the cellar, the scene may easily be judged. A Russian is always thirsty, and if the *aqua vita* flamed as it went down, the cup would never remove from his lips till he had seen the bottom of it.

The fourth day of the Maslanitz was fixed for the attack. The hour to begin when after midnight the clock struck one.

The convent consists of a vast quadrangle. You enter under a magnificent gateway, over which rises a

beautiful cupola gilt with copper, containing the great bell, and surmounted by a golden cross. Fronting the gateway, stands a lofty gothic chapel and their common hall, which occupy the whole of that side the quadrangle. A grand arch leading to the gardens divides them, covered by a cupola similar to that by which you enter, and occupied by the clock of the monastery. Beneath the hall are the kitchen, buttery and store rooms, to which you descend by a noble flight of marble stairs.

The right and left sides of the quadrangle contain the cells of the monks three stories high, opening on common staircases, which you enter under an elegant piazza, which surrounds the whole building, and affords them shelter from the sun and rain. The side next the gateway is occupied by the abbots lodgings, the

the treasury and the apartments belonging to the officers and attendants of the house.

As during these days of festivity, the gates were thrown open, the area of the quadrangle was free for all visitors, and many a Russian having drank deep of the hospitality of the house, had there measured his length. Here the banditti assembled in different quarters, impatiently expecting the stroke of one.

At the sound, they joined in a body under the gateway. Six were stationed there with cocked pistols. Two of them entered the porter's lodge, who was too far gone to know what was passing without; they seized the keys, and shut and locked the gates. Four, armed as their companions, kept guard at the opposite arch, leading to the gardens, preventing all escape. The rest, having first se-

cured the peasants in the area, many of whom were sufficiently safe by intoxication, and leaving a guard over them, divided into two bodies. One of them being dispatched to each side of the quadrangle, they secured the staircases, and entering with as little noise as possible into the cells of the monks and their attendants, bound them safely, and locked them in, with threats of instant death, if they but attempted to escape. All was done with a quickness and dexterity which their trade had taught them.

Yarmak with two of his companions repaired to the Abbot's lodge. He was retired to bed early; but as the weather was not warm, had taken a bed-fellow along with him; the round, ruddy, buxom wife of his principal farmer. The noise, unavoidable from forcing the chamber door,

door, made them both start up in the bed on their seat, with terror in their countenances, and in that attitude, half naked, they met the eyes of Yarmak and his companions.

“Holy Abbot,” says Yarmak, “be
 “not affrighted. We are sorry to
 “disturb your slumbers. We are
 “only come to borrow of you, as
 “you do from your neighbours. Secure them, comrades. The night
 “is cold, put on the Abbot the good
 “woman’s coif, her gown and petticoats, they will keep him warm.
 “She is young, and cooler clothing
 “will serve her turn, the Abbot’s
 “tunic and cowl will be enough.”

No sooner spoke than done. The goodly pair with trembling submit to their transformation. And binding them back to back, the robbers left them to wait the morning, when the monks should come as usual to beg the Abbot’s benediction.

It

It would be too long to tell the various droll scenes which that night exhibited to the banditti, in the cells of the monks: as many of them were found to be possessed as little with the gift of continence as their superior.

Having effectually secured every creature from the possibility of escape or resistance, they visited the treasury their principal object. They found it stored with silver and gold, and the finest furs. Having packed up what they esteemed most valuable and portable, and equipped the horses which they found in the stables of the monastery, the beggars mounted, and taking the keys, locked the gates after them, and hastened to their retreat with all possible expedition.

The wonder of those who visited the monastery in the morning to see the gates locked, increased, as the day

day advanced, and no one appeared. They scaled the walls, and entering the quadrangle released those who were bound, then visited the cells, and liberated the prisoners.

The monks were no sooner at liberty, than they flew in a body to the Abbot's lodge. But how great was their confusion and astonishment, to find their superior so travestied, and the farmer's wife metamorphosed into the Abbot! However, they agreed to hush up the matter for the credit of the house: besides, that their own cells had exhibited some similar adventures, and left little room for mutual upbraidings. One good effect it produced. Conscious shame, as well as the emotions of gratitude for their deliverance, suggested to them the propriety of releasing two of their brethren, who for a month past had been confined in the dungeon, on
bread

bread and water, as a penance for their crimes. The one of them for having eaten an egg on a fast day without a dispensation; and the other for murmuring against the sentence as severe, and observing he did not see so much harm in it.

Thus, is it ever observable, that where perverted Christianity is established, the great crimes are disobedience, not to the doctrines of Christ, but to the commandments of men.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE life of a robber, even when successful, is embittered with fear, harrassed with suspense, compassed with danger, and in perpetual alarms. He neither rises up nor lies down.

down in safety. His career is usually short, and his end ignominious. How much sweeter are the gains of honest industry, and a more scanty provision with security and peace; where the sleep is unbroken with guilt and fear, and the shield of integrity covers the bosom of the just!

The repeated depredations of these banditti, and their late insult on the ministers of religion, awakened the choler of the Czar. He sent the strictest orders to the Governor of Casan to spare no expence, and use every expedient to discover their retreat. And an accident soon happened that afforded him the desired opportunity.

One of the robbers who had been dispatched on the scout, to look out for prey and to gain intelligence, had entered Casan in disguise. He was one of those who had so desperately fought

fought their way through the dragoons, when so many of their companions fell: and distinguishable by a scar on his left cheek, the consequence of a wound which he had received in an affray.

In the very inn where he had taken up his residence, it happened that one of the dragoons was quartered, who had defended the caravan. He recollected his face as he passed through the inn-yard, and remembered the scar on his cheek.

He immediately acquainted the Governor with his discovery; and that night a file of musketeers entered the robber's chamber, and carried him in chains to the citadel.

On his examination next day, he stoutly denied the charge laid against him, and made a plausible story of his occupation and abode; but when the rack was produced, and he was bound

bound to it, added to the promise of pardon, and a great reward, if he would discover the retreat of his accomplices, his courage failed him. The fear of torture, and hope of impunity, prevailed over his fidelity. He begged to be unbound, with the assurance of a plenary confession, and discovery of his comrades retreat.

The Governor of Casan fully apprized of the Czar's solicitude to suppress these banditti, delayed not a moment: as soon as he had learnt their number and abode, he ordered five hundred dragoons of the garrison to mount, and prepare for a march, with the robber for their guide, and bound, to prevent the possibility of escape. The colonel who commanded this secret expedition, had orders to bring the banditti to Casan dead or alive, and to demolish their lurking places.

Early

Early in the morning they hastened forward, with the robber chained to two of the dragoons. The distance was about four days journey, but the way narrow, difficult through woods and defiles only known to the banditti themselves.

During four days they had advanced deep into that uninhabited wild. One hour more would have brought them in view of the sequestered valley. But the day began to wear away; and they were unwilling to make their attack in the night, lest their prey should escape. They halted therefore in the evening, ready at the returning dawn of light to pursue their march, and finish their expedition.

The evening was remarkably beautiful, and Yarmak had retired from his companions, as he often did, to indulge his pensive mood, and cherish
in

in solitude the dear, but melancholy remembrance of Velika.

Lost in the deep reflections on his unhappy lot, he had wandered far into the woods, and the advancing shadows of the evening awakened him from his reverie. He stopt—and as he turned round, he thought he heard the neighing of horses. He listened attentively, and a moment confirmed his suspicions.

He instantly advanced towards the place from whence the sound seemed to proceed, and cautiously moving forward under the cover of the trees, he approached so near undiscovered, as plainly to discern the encampment. And as the twilight was yet strong, how great was his terror and astonishment, to behold the well known countenance of Karapouschin, and to perceive that he was chained between two dragoons.

He

He nearly counted their number; and marked their precautions to prevent surprise; which rendered the idea of an attack desperate. Flight now appeared the only door of hope, and for that scarce a moment remained. Retiring therefore with all the speed which the imminence of the danger required, he reached the tents as supper was serving, and all his companions jovially assembled in their common hall.

The relation of Yarmak, with the impression which the fight had made on his intrepid heart and countenance, spread dismay and panic through that bold troop, unused to fear.

To wait there the approach of their enemies in the morning was madness, and to attack them desperate. Though they might, and no doubt would, sell their lives dearly, the contest was too unequal, and a
present

present or future ignominious death stared them in the face.

“ To lead you, comrades, to the
“ enemy,” said Yarmak, “ I should
“ not now for a moment hesitate, if
“ there appeared the remotest pro-
“ spect of success. I know your
“ courage, and gladly would sacri-
“ fice my life in your service. If
“ we stay here, the ruin is more inevi-
“ table as soon as the light of day
“ returns. But the present moment
“ is yet our own. The world is
“ wide, and other regions stretch
“ out to us their hospitable arms.
“ Prudence, activity, and your wont-
“ ed resolution may yet extricate us
“ from the present dangers, and
“ lodged far hence in safety, we may
“ plan our future empire. My ad-
“ vice, (if better be not suggested)
“ is to mount our fleetest horses, re-
“ move with us the most valuable of
“ our

“ our possessions which are least cum-
“ berfome, and turning our faces to
“ the north, feek an afylum among
“ fome diftant hord of Tongufes, till
“ the prefent ftorm is blown over.
“ We know the fecret paffes of thefe
“ mountains. Our purfuers cannot
“ overtake us. This night will carry
“ us far out of their reach, and un-
“ tried paths, I doubt not, lead us
“ to a place of fafety.”

Every man concurred in the wifdom of the propofal. Not a moment was loft. They equipped their horfes—feized their arms—with what provifion and ammunition they could carry—and packing up the choicelt of their treasures, turned their backs, not without a figh, on that delightful retreat.

6 MA 50

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

